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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

CONSCIENCE IN THE NOVELS OF JOSEPH CONRAD

BY



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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Conscience in the Novels of Joseph Conrad," submitted by Felix Mnthali in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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- ABSTRACT -

Conrad's characters retreat from life in order to return to life. They move towards life in order to retreat from life. The process is intricate and profound. That is why the patterns of this study are critical constructs which have an intrinsic and inescapable genesis in the novels themselves. These patterns are continually defined in order to establish their relationship to Conrad's own meanings. It becomes apparent that the matrix of Conradian creativity is that whole gamut of ethical dilemmas which reveal levels of awareness without which characters become meaningless. Man confronts ethical dilemmas. The confrontation needs an element of consciousness which this study has called "conscience." Conrad's characters confront moral dilemmas in different ways. Some are highly aware of their situation, others are totally blind. All of them reach a point of impact at which they are "saved" from the consequences of their "choice" or else irredeemably perish. The choice is between equally destructive elements. One can choose "the sepulchral" civilization of Europe or with Kurtz enter the Dionysiac frenzy of "the heart of darkness." One can pin one's faith on "material interests" as Charles Gould does or with Martin Decoud commit suicide because nothing makes sense any more. One can betray and mock human endeavours as Razumov and Axel Heyst do or for an ideal one can lose one's life as Victor Haldin does.

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- INTRODUCTION -

This thesis is an exploration of the theme of conscience. Conscience is a wide theme. I have tried to limit myself to the most salient features of a problem that crops up everywhere in Conrad's works. It is a moral problem. I have isolated three features of this problem and the features correspond to the three chapters of the thesis.

In the first place I explore the ambivalence of human actions. This is the problem of motives. When Conrad ironically refers to the colonial traders of Heart of Darkness as "pilgrims", to what is he calling our attention? What is the point made by the whole inversion of imagery in this book? What does the central figure of Kurtz stand for? What does Marlow really see on his pilgrimage "to the first ages of man?" To what extent can we say with Albert Guerard that either Heart of Darkness is an exploration of the soul or its length is indefensible? By making my enquiry along these lines I have seen Conrad as showing how man is pulled towards two extremes. A desire to civilize others can be at the same time a call to murder, plunder and loot--a chance to let loose the Dionysiac frenzy that lies chained by the norms of civilisation. What, therefore, are we to make of declarations such as that of Kurtz--a long dissertation to the Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs? It is ambivalent. It is, after all, executed in

four brave words, "Exterminate all the brutes." Kurtz is sincere. He is also a demon. He surrounds his camp with the heads of his victims. He is successful. But Kurtz is a consciousness, the acme of the traders, "the emissary of pity and science and progress," the best of the lot. "All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz." All Europe at the time of Kurtz is scrambling for Africa, which means, says Marlow, the taking away of land from those who have flatter noses than yourself. Where, then, is "the heart of darkness?" Not in Europe. "This also has been one of the dark places of the earth." Not in Africa! Those cannibals will not eat Marlow and his friends. They have a sense of proportion, of balance, of restraint. Where is the heart of darkness, then? In the heart.

The camera leaves the jungles of Africa to explore the waves of the sea. Here too are black and white colours, sunshine and darkness. Here, upon the immortal sea, we are to wring a meaning out of existence. There is also a demon here. He is not white as Kurtz is. He is black, coal black. He sleeps and sprawls in his cabin like an idol and the other sailors serve him "like the base courtiers of a hated prince." Why? They hate and love this black representative of the devil. The more they hate him the more they love him. He shares with primordial malice the power to evoke their sanctity and their Satanic tendencies. Evil is here represented by "a cool, towering and superb" black man who degenerates, like Milton's Satan, into a stalking death. The sailors

respond to him. Their responses reveal their ambivalence to this man. But where is the heart of darkness? Not in James Wait. He is as immense as the sea--and as neutral. Where is it, then? Not in Donkin. He is a labour leader though he could also be a mere swindler. Once again, the heart of darkness is in the heart, not always safely guarded.

The second chapter of this thesis has no demons. It has only idealists and nihilists. The idealists turn out to be nihilists and vice versa. I am expanding the ambivalence explored in the first chapter. In this chapter, discussing mostly Nostromo and Lord Jim, idealists are seen as men with illusions--as who has not? The problem is that the idealists think that their illusions can change the chaos of history into an orderly evolution. They are tragic. History moves on unconcerned by such illusions. Costaguana in Nostromo is circular. We end where we began. Nothing has drastically changed. People are still clutching their gods of incipient revolts, corruption and exploitation. Meanwhile the idealists have sacrificed their marriages, their fiances, their integrity, for a passionate belief in the power of impulse or reason. Conrad's omniscient view of all this is that ambiguous judgment Marlow makes on Jim:

He goes away from a living woman to celebrate his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct he passes from my eyes like a disembodied spirit astray

among the passions of this earth
 (Lord Jim, p. 516.)

It is perhaps this judgment which the thesis follows up in the final chapter. This ambiguous judgment cannot stand for the whole Conradian ethos. What is the point of listening to one's conscience if it only leads to the world of shades and not to life? Conrad says that conscience leads to life and Marlow's view of Jim's final reward is ironic. That is what my exploration has dug out of Typhoon, Victory, Under Western Eyes and even Chance — though Chance is thematically defective. Conrad destroys the central tension of this novel, the central problem, long before the book reaches the "happily-ever-after" stage. In fact, it is the only one of the books I have used that has this poor construction.

The problem in the final chapter of this thesis, then, is that posed by an irrational, imperfect world which, all the same, must be confronted, in order to make life meaningful. Some people confront the world instinctively. They are dull by reason of their consistency. They are the MacWhirrs and the Mitchells of this world. Others pass a labyrinthine progress before realising that Lena and Morrison have to be loved, not patronised as specimens of "the great joke of existence in which the wages are paid in counterfeit money." Such a man is Heyst. He needs to love and to put his trust in life. Razumov of Under Western Eyes has a dif-

ferent problem though he also needs other people. He confuses Russia with endless space whereas Russia is Haldin. Russia is Razumov the cripple, the man who chooses confession and persecution after hiding behind intellectual audacity.

The drama has run full circle. Human actions are ambivalent. Human ideals cannot change the earth. But these ambivalent actions must be made to try and change the earth. Imperfection must be accepted, not shunned. We are back to Stein's words in Lord Jim:

A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb out into the air as inexperienced people endeavour to do he drowns The way is to the destructive element submit yourself, and with the exertions of your hands and feet in the water make the deep deep sea keep you up. So if you ask me--how to be? I will tell you. In the destructive element immerse. (p. 214.)

The deep deep sea is not so deep if it be a symbol for this thesis. It is a destructive element and it has kept me up.

- CHAPTER I -

- THAT INSCRUTABLE SELF WITHIN -

For Joseph Conrad, statement and technique revolve around the theme of conscience. Symbolism, imagery, and setting are all used as signposts to what lies beneath concrete actions and characteristic statements. Moral problems are posited not by a single action or a single person, but by a whole situation in which men and events have their place. Single actions such as Jim's jumping from the Patna are, to use T. S. Eliot's technical term, objective correlatives around which dilemmas develop and are resolved. That the resolution is often doubtful and has a taste of ashes is perhaps the clearest sign of Conrad's preoccupation with the unmoved mover of human actions rather than with the actions themselves. It is while trying to reach at this mover, at this conscience, that we find Conradian heroes glaringly disrobed of all outward pretences but still not so amenable to judgement. After all, in the final analysis who can judge a man such as Lord Jim?

The interaction between technique and statement is clearest in Heart of Darkness, Conrad's most outstanding novellette. Here the use of psychological doubles enables Conrad to state that civilization can only hide and never obliterate barbarism. Men may outwardly approach perfection but deep within, their inscrutable selves will show that they are capable of the most heinous inhumanities imaginable. Marlowe commenting on what he saw on his trip to Africa becomes the conscience of

what his company stands for. He becomes the conscience of the best of the company's agents, Kurtz. But Marlow by the end of his trip has been chastised by what he has seen--and he has really seen the nadir of depravity. This haunts him because he is in fact Kurtz's double. He also becomes the conscience of Europe because "all Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz". During Conrad's trip to the Congo all Europe was engaged in the hectic business of parcelling out Africa.

The use of doubles is an extremely effective technique here because it enables Conrad to use the surface trip across the Congo as a trip into the heart of the hypocrisy of colonialism. He can then lay bare the moral duplicity behind the pretended religious zeal for colonisation by establishing a scale in which both the colonized peoples and their rulers can be weighed. What lies hidden in the remote corners of consciousness can then be vividly rendered. Europe not only has been one of the dark places of the earth, like Africa, but is quite capable of returning to this darkness in the form of a man like Kurtz. A Darwinian view of civilization is pessimistically acted out here and the possibility of evolving backwards is the most frightening spectacle in an encounter with the self. The perfect idealist Kurtz is also the practical exponent of the extermination of brutes. He is the all-seeing Marlow, the inventor of the lie. The pilgrims of trade are potentially the yelling savages along the coast cruised by Marlow's ship. The self-restraining cannibals on Marlow's steamship represent the essential dignity of man shorn of the trappings of civilization. The narrator

Marlow feigns surprise at the cannibals' restraint only to drive the point about dignity home to his listeners:

But there was the fact facing me-- the fact dazzling, to be seen, like the foam on the depths of the sea, like a ripple on an unfathomable enigma, a mystery greater--when I thought of it--than the curious, the curious inexplicable clamour that had swept by us on the river bank, behind the blind whiteness of the fog.²

A little later Marlow weighs one of the pilgrims on the same scale of restraint and finds him wanting:

He was just the kind of man who could wish to preserve appearances. That was his restraint.³

There is in Heart of Darkness, self-discovery for every participant. Europe acquires a new perspective on colonialism. What was being idealised as a responsibility turns out to be little more than a scramble for loot, (moral and economic loot). The highly civilized Marlow sees himself as a potential howling savage and he cannot help explaining how civilization hides such savagery:

You wonder I didn't go ashore for a howl and a dance? Well, no--I didn't. Fine sentiments, you say? Fine sentiments, he hanged! I had no time. I had to mess about with white-lead and strips of woollen blanket helping to put bandages on those leaky steampipes--I tell you.⁴

The most penetrating essay on Heart of Darkness seems to be that of Albert Guerard.⁵ According to Guerard the technique in Heart of Darkness points to "the inner station" of Marlow. The book is about Marlow and his confrontation with the self or else its length is in-

defensible. In Heart of Darkness Marlow begins as a narrator giving us glimpses of Kurtz and Africa long before we are there. As the book progresses we also move "deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness"⁶ and Marlow's involvement in the affairs of Kurtz becomes more and more complicated. In the end Kurtz and Marlow are one and Marlow cannot disguise his protectiveness for his double. The story moves in waves. We land in Africa long before we are there. There is a thrust forward followed by retreat until we have grasped the whole panorama covered by the story. In a way the movement of the story follows Heraclitian laws in that the present is only realized in terms of the past and the future. Existence is not linear. It ceases to be a distracted observation of the fading away of the present into the future and becomes an exploration of eternity--and what an eternity! Even Milton's devils have a better time in hell. We do not really move in space from the one place to the other--we simply have before us a panorama of impressions whose convergence constitutes the hollow man being spiritually dissected. In Heart of Darkness as in The Secret Agent and Lord Jim ^{symbolism} ~~surrealism~~ and irony are the artist's most outstanding implements. In a way the hollow men of all these books are like huge onions being peeled. At the centre of such men is a vacancy whose chief attribute happens to be active force.

Our exploration of the eternity that is Marlow's conscience is intensified until we are ready to believe that he is like Jim, "one of us." The climax of the best of Conrad's novels is this rendez-

vous with a hero's hidden consciousness. We meet the blind unconscious will to which all earlier glimpses have been subjected. The stuff out of which a Conradian character ^{emerges} is revealed in these rare glimpses which are unified by the decisive encounter with the self. Mrs. Van Ghent's vivid description of Jim's jump from the Patna is worth quoting here:

Jim's shocking encounter with himself at the moment of his jump from the Patna is a model of those moments when the destiny each person carries within him, the destiny fully moulded in the unconscious will, lifts its blind head from the dark, drinks blood and speaks.⁷

The full impact of a Conradian character cannot be assessed until the whole novel has been read. A Conradian character "lives" in the sense that his significance in the story can be related to some confrontation between the outward idealised self and that dynamic uncontrollable unconscious which really makes him go. We cannot explain Marlow's enigmatic manner of relating his tale until we have seen his self-discovery in the encounter with Kurtz. We cannot explain Marlow's omniscient stance until we know that he was presented with the possibility of an existence entailing death and that he chose this possibility. Kurtz has become the picture of his choice. We cannot now explain the one without a clear picture of the other. The restraints of civilization are only explicable in terms of the laxity of primitive order. Marlow has this in mind when he tells his listeners:

You can't understand. How could you?--with solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by kind neighbours ready to cheer you or to fall

on you, stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman, in the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums--how can you imagine what particular region of the first ages a man's untrammelled feet may take him into by the way of solitude--utter solitude without a policeman--by way of silence--utter silence, where no warning voice of a kind neighbour can be heard whispering of public opinion.⁸

The continuum being explained by Marlow here is that marked by Apollonian rationalisation at one end and Dionysian wantonness at the other. Civilization appears to travel all along this continuum and Conrad is here dramatizing what Nietzsche and Freud emphasise in different words. The Socratic man whom Marlow has been celebrating as a "bearer of the spark from the sacred fire" of civilization discards his spark and merges his identity with the essential darkness of his new surroundings. The rigorous demands for correct forms soon crumble into the wantonness that leads to darkness and death. Again and again Marlow shows that mere forms are not enough, that the medium is not the message, to use MacLuhan's terms. The physical subordination of dark Africa ceases to stand for the conquest of darkness by light and becomes a nightmare of man's inhumanity to man. The Congo has not yet recovered from this nightmare. To properly act out the nightmare Conrad blends his ^{symbolism} ~~surrealism~~ with an irony matched in bitterness only by that in The Secret Agent where he found it necessary to point out that

The purely artistic purpose, that of applying an ironic method to a subject of that kind, was formulated with deliberation and in the earnest belief that ironic treatment alone would enable

me to say all I felt I would have to say in scorn as well as in pity.⁹

In Heart of Darkness, the pity and scorn ^{are} ~~is~~ heaped on the "bearers of a spark from the sacred fire"¹⁰ whose religious zeal for profane pre-occupations constituted a chimera of ethical ambiguity. One must hasten to add that the individual participants were victims of the sheer momentum of events. They had little time to see the irony inherent in the schemes they were undertaking. That Kurtz came to realize this at the end of his life is the most meaningful significance of his cry, "The horror! The horror!"

Heart of Darkness proceeds not only by matching "doubles" but also by the use of contrasts. The restraint of the cannibals is contrasted with the excesses of Kurtz and the hollowness of the pilgrims. The traders' sanctification of mere ivory is a contrast to the callous handling of human life at the Central Station. What is sacrosanct is desecrated in favour of trifles. Kurtz has substituted prayers with the magic incantation to himself: "My Ivory, my Camp, my ~~Intended~~, my....."

Kurtz is the central symbol in Heart of Darkness. In him all the contradictions dramatised in the novel converge. Kurtz is evil as vacancy and as active force. The story labours to peel him out layer by layer only to arrive at mere emptiness. He is nothing but a voice although he is the touchstone of all the declared aims of colonialism:

He is an emissary of pity, and science, and progress and the devil knows what else. We want for the guidance of the cause intrusted

to us by Europe, so to speak, higher intellig- 11
ence, wide sympathies, a singleness of purpose.

The speaker is summing up the declared platitudes of the day. Conrad's art shows that the truly cogent attitudes are represented by the ambivalence that is Kurtz. Kurtz personifies the inanity involved in the shelling of a continent which has not and cannot declare war. Kurtz's art is also the binding of contradictions:

Then I noticed a small sketch in oil, on a panel, representing a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch. The background was sombre, almost black. The movement of the woman was stately, and the effect of the torch-light on the face was sinister. 12

In this painting is enacted the barbarity perpetrated by the educators on those to be educated. Not only are the blind leading the blind but the leaders' movements have a sinister effect on those being led. The picture in its own way dramatises the inversion of symbolism which the language effects. Again this topsy-turvy world is centred on Kurtz. He stands immense before us as the contradiction of a silenced conscience--a conscience whose dying vision is one of horror. The road travelled has been long and arduous but a dying ^{man} whose memorable vision is horror has perhaps despatched the idealist with a bang. Certainly the ringing rhetoric of the pamphlet to the society for the suppression of savage customs can only be climaxed by a bang, not a whimper--for Kurtz is a practical man. Indeed, he is so practical that a ringing call to European responsibility is put into effect in four words, "Exterminate all the brutes!"¹³ Kurtz follows his own advice and sur-

rounds his camp with the human heads he has hewn down.

The inversion of imagery in the book acts out the ethical farce behind groups such as that formed by King Leopold "for the Exploration and Civilization of Central Africa." What an exploration--and what a civilization! Conrad's application of the powerful intensity of myth and symbol enables him to expose hypocrisy and cynicism thereby digging into the heart of a problem on which even the best of historians seem shaky--the multiple motives of imperialism. To say this is not to deny the great work of humanitarians and other men of good will who did honestly open up Africa. It is merely to show that the unmoved mover of even the best of our actions is not as simple as declarations say. Indeed, in Nostromo the word Declaration is repeated until it represents the most thinly disguised sanction for plunder and loot. Civilization merely hides with its forms what it cannot obliterate with its content. That is why Conrad feels it necessary to drop a concrete hint of what his real concern is all about. A doctor examines Marlow's cranium and points out that for all who go to the Congo "the changes take place inside."¹⁴ Then he points out ominously that the old knitter of black wool could not be seen twice:

Not many of those she looked at ever saw her
again--not half, by a long way. ¹⁵

The deterioration cryptically prophesied here is less physical than spiritual. Here is where the stinging bitterneess of the religious symbolism comes in. The traders as pilgrims are personifications of a far-

flung desecration. They exalt simple greed and avarice above the peace which surpasses understanding. Conrad is here crying like Jung for the restoration of the spiritual segment to the totality of man. By sticking religious labels on people bent on sheer loot, Conrad is dramatising the needs mapped out in Jung's essay, Modern Man in search of a soul.¹⁶ In a way Marlow is like the hero of Pilgrim's Progress, a man in search of that which endures in human consciousness. Marlow adopts a Buddha-like posture and the pilgrims he discusses have to pass like martyrs through a gate guarded by two women knitting black wool. Those people play the role of martyrs because in seeking to live a dead and barren life they are sacrificed to the idolatry of soulless reality. The more pathetic then is Marlow's comment:

Often far away there I thought of these two, guarding the door of darkness, knitting black wool as for a warm pall, one introducing, continuously into the unknown, the other scrutinizing the cheery and foolish faces with unconcerned old eyes. Ave! Old knitter of black wool. Morituri te salutant. Not many of those she looked at ever saw her again--not half, by a long way.¹⁷

Conrad appears to say that whatever there is for man to fear is not external to man. Like William Golding¹⁸ he seems to say that the beast that prowls in the thick of night is within those who fear it. The brooding gloom merely broods but does not per se make men good or bad --any more than the sea in the Nigger of the "Narcissus" or that god-forsaken republic of Costaguana in Nostromo would be capable of doing this. The aspiration to unbridled power and licence, for instance,

may be more easily satisfied in the one environment and not in the other but it never follows that the environment causes the aspiration. Pitting the might of Europe's most modern invention against a virtually unarmed continent can only spring from deep down in men's minds, not from the sight of primeval jungles.

In locating those repulsive aspects of Africa's colonisation in the recesses of human consciousness Conrad gives proof, if any were ever required, of his impartiality in race relations. True enough, the word 'nigger' crops up everywhere in Heart of Darkness. There is also at one stage when Marlow discusses his boiler-man a denial of complicated skills and abstract thinking to the African people akin to that of, say, the late Albert Schweitzer. But Heart of Darkness easily transcends this paternalism by dealing with human beings as human beings, not as black and white puppets. Hence the fact that the cannibals come out better than any of the white companions of Marlow. Conrad is here as in all his masterpieces concerned less with surface phenomena than with the unseen laws that make men go--and in this black and white are devils and saints alike. It is because Conrad celebrates the skinless (and boneless) configuration of the soul that for men like James Wait and the Montero brothers there are equal nobodies like Verloc, Kurtz and Donkin. Moral idiots can be matched with moral idiots on both sides of the colour line. Heroes too know no colour, because heroism consists not in the accomplished act so much as in the permanent act of obedience to one's conscience. To the many real heroes in the

novels one can add the dark contingent led by Doramin, Dain Waris in Lord Jim, as well as the cannibals and the singing "longshoremen" in Heart of Darkness. Race relations have been touched on here only to show that when Conrad called his most famous story, Heart of Darkness, he meant, quite simply, the darkness of the heart. Conrad was no Rousseau. He did not, as a man who had travelled to Africa, need any patronising romanticism towards "the noble savage." He wrote of human beings as human beings deserve to be written about, i.e. as animals governed by conscience although often inhibited by forms called civilization. This is what to me gives Heart of Darkness its poignancy and pathos--the fact that so much self-discovery is dramatised in so short a story. I have often thought of Heart of Darkness whenever confronted with brutality and the history of atrocities that go under the name of world wars. It is significant that for all the lush exuberance of the elements in Conrad's novels human behaviour obeys the Conradian version of human laws and not any fanciful and exotic influence of bizarre vegetation, fauna or climate. But that is a point to be developed later.

There are similarities of form and content between Heart of Darkness and The Nigger of the "Narcissus". Both are prose poems centred around objective correlatives and both have something to say about the nature of the darkness of the heart. Their techniques differ in one important aspect--the irony in The Nigger of the "Narcissus" is less biting than that in Heart of Darkness. There is no inversion of imagery

in The Nigger of the "Narcissus" and the author extends a visibly protecting hand to the whole ship, a protecting hand that could not enter Heart of Darkness without impairing the author's point of view. The Nigger of the "Narcissus" stands up on the majesty of its poetry. The beleaguered ship is that of "the Ancient Mariner" rather than that of the traders of Heart of Darkness. Its whole aura is one of a deep, mystical concatenation of being epitomised by Wait's burial.

In Heart of Darkness Kurtz embodies all the contradictions in Europe's attitude to Africa and to itself. Kurtz is the personification of both the unattainable ambitions of imperialism as well as the repulsive hollowness and excesses which the Romans summed up in the saying, "Corruptio optimi pessima."¹⁹ Kurtz becomes Marlow's double precisely because the Marlow we are listening to needs to be dead before we can imagine him doing what Kurtz does. But deep down where the sun of perception never shines but where Marlow's real "horror" lies, Marlow and Kurtz are one. Kurtz evokes all the unwanted emotions in Marlow.

In The Nigger of the "Narcissus" James Wait takes the role of Kurtz but there is no need for any inversion of imagery. He is vacancy and active force from the start. He is the booming voice that calls for a response from everyone right from the start:

I belong to the ship.²⁰

Later we are to see that he is the personification of the good and evil that dogs the ship--merely because his presence on the ship will touch

the conscience of everyone on board. An incipient mutiny, a moment of sanctity, even a reprieve from the sea will all be linked up with James Wait. He uncovers the conscience of the ship but is himself without a conscience. The cook has in that sense rightly identified him with the devil:

The poor fellow had scared me. I thought I
had seen the devil.²¹

Just as Heart of Darkness can be regarded as the process of peeling out an active force called Kurtz only to find that he really has no spiritual entrails, The Nigger of the "Narcissus" may be regarded as a process of dissecting this towering immensity called James Wait only to find that he is "hollow at the core." His hollowness, however, enhances the crew's sanctity in a way that Kurtz's does not. The directness of the imagery here works out in favor of the crew whereas the indirectness of the imagery in Heart of Darkness strikes at the pilgrims. In both cases the central hollow man is the touchstone to the conscience of all the other characters.

James Wait is our quest in The Nigger of the "Narcissus". We are with him from the beginning but it is not until his burial that we can say we have found him at the "Inner Station." For to find James Wait is to find the hidden consciousness of the crew and this does not happen until Wait is rescued from the ship's bowels. Each time Conrad's pen is focused on James Wait there is a crisis on the ship. When James Wait is out of sight the ship's mystical body is in perfect order. Wait is the fountain of crises right from the beginning:

He put his hand to his side and coughed twice,
 a cough metallic, hollow, and tremendously loud;
 it resounded like two explosions in a vault; the
 dome of the sea rang to it, and the iron plates
 of the ship's bulwarks seemed to vibrate in
 unison.....²²

Unlike Eliot's Prufrock, the hollow man here disturbs the universe. All through the book Conrad treats this ship as if it were the universe and as if Wait were the evil genius of that universe, the source of temptations and self-centred generosity. We have in James Wait the reverse of Lord Jim. Jim's consciousness responds to the changes in his milieu whereas it is the milieu of James Wait that has to respond to his changes. As Albert Guerard²³ says, James Wait on board is a determinant "force X."

It is this unpredictable force which brings out the sailors' confrontation with their hidden self. It produces the sailors' solidarity in time of peril only to show that this solidarity is also the result of deep-seated selfishness. In the delicate task of extricating James Wait from the ship's womb is also dramatized the egoism behind the apparent heroism:

Indignation and doubt grappled within us in a scuffle that trampled upon the finest of our feelings. And we hated him because of the suspicion; we detested him because of the doubt. We could not scorn him safely --neither could we pity him without risk to our dignity. So we hated him and passed him carefully from hand to hand. We cried, Got him?--Yes, All right. Let go. And he swung from one enemy to another, showing about as much life as an old bolster would do...

...We were always incurably anxious to hear what he had to say.....The Secret and ardent desire of our hearts was the desire to beat him viciously with our

fists about the head; and we handled him as
tenderly as though he had been made of glass
.....²⁴

There is more than a mere suggestion that the incorrigible James Wait understands the ambivalence of his colleagues' kindness. They can never seem to do anything right. He subconsciously takes delight in torturing them both by his peevishness and by his death. This active force who is hollow at the core is also a stalking death:

Men stood around very still and with exasperated eyes. It was just what they had expected and hated to hear, that idea of a stalking death, thrust to them many times by this obnoxious nigger. He seemed to take a pride in that death which, so far, had attended only upon the ease of his life; he was overbearing about it, as if no one else in the world had ever been intimate with such a companion, he paraded it unceasingly before us with an affectionate persistence that made its presence indubitable, and at the same time incredible. No man could be suspected of such monstrous friendship! Was he a reality or was he a sham--this ever expected visitor of Jimmy's? We hesitated between pity and mistrust while on the slightest provocation, he shook before our eyes the bones of his bothersome and infamous skeleton. ²⁶

The reaction to the stalking death here puts the crew in a much better light than James Wait. For it is here hinted that Wait's deception has become self-deception. James Wait is the greatest victim of his own cancerous behaviour.

This stalking death is a degeneration of the Satan-like figure earlier described as "cool, towering and superb."²⁷ The physical and moral degeneration that dogs this figure develops into the moral degeneration of the crew. What began as a hollow active force ends as a hollow decaying and infectious wound. The wound becomes an

"imperium in imperio" on the microcosm of solidarity that is the 'Narcissus'. All moral degeneration on the ship gets linked up to James Wait. He is the Satan of Paradise Lost who degenerates from being the symbol of the sin of "hubris" or soaring above one's station to being the symbol of corrupt matter, the incarnation of the sin of sinking below one's station. Again in a certain Miltonic sense, James Wait is a temptation to be valiantly resisted. The men assist at his rebirth on the ship just as men will always court temptation. They assist at his burial just as neophytes must assist at the casting out of evil. These sailors, after all, undergo trial by water. It is a trial in which Wait plays a prominent part by sharing with the immense ocean that power to test mankind which belongs only to the original sources of good and evil. The crew's obeisance to James Wait has this acknowledgement of omnipotence about it:

We served him in his bed with rage and humility, as though we had been the base courtiers of a hated prince; and he rewarded us by his unconciliating criticism. He had found the secret of keeping for ever on the run the fundamental imbecility of mankind; he had the secret of life that confounded dying man, and he made himself master of every moment of our existence. We grew desperate and remained submissive. 28

The moral degeneration fails to touch either old Singleton, the incorruptible prophet, or Donkin, the unabashed reprobate. The author seems to say that Singleton cannot be infected by Wait's decay because he is an already proven child of light. He is past all tempta-

tions; he is saved. Indeed even when we meet him for the first time he is already representing "the wisdom of half a century spent in listening to the thunder of the waves"²⁹ standing "with his face to the light and his back to the darkness."³⁰ He knows that what is to be feared on a ship is the men on it. He is the venerable resemblance of "a bearded and savage patriarch, the incarnation of barbarian wisdom, serene in the blasphemous turmoil of the world."³¹ Singleton stands for light and the cankerous and festering moral wound aboard cannot hide itself from him. Even his steering of the ship is "with care" and he collapses after standing at the wheel for a super-human period of thirty hours. In fact, Conrad gives this patriarch, this child of the sea, not only the power to prophesy Wait's death but also the power to exorcise this demon. The drama of this exorcism has a Biblical momentum about it:

'Well, get on with your dying' he said with venerable mildness, 'don't raise a blamed fuss over that job. We can't help you!' Jimmy fell back in his bunk, and for a long time lay very still wiping the perspiration off his chin. ³²

Singleton then becomes a representative of light and his prophecies pull the crew to one side. He shocks his audience and becomes a conscience warning them against Jimmy's deception. Not even to Captain Allistoun, the deity on the Olympus of his ship's poop, have such powers been endowed by the author. The ship's speed obeys Singleton's prophecy and one can safely say that in so doing he becomes a Christ

figure--a figure whom the elements obey.

But Singleton is only one figure. While he represents light, there are others who represent the heart of darkness and stand with as much power over the elements as he does. He can exorcise James Wait without radically changing him. He can show his superiority over James Wait but there is Donkin to reckon with. This other child of darkness is a nihilist whose friendship with Wait is the result of a recognition of each other's cunning:

Donkin abused him to his face, jeered at him while he gasped; and the same day Wait would lend him a warm jersey. Once Donkin reviled him for half an hour; reproached him with the extra work his malingering gave to the watch; and ended by calling him 'a black-faced swine'. Under the spell of our cursed perversity we were horror-struck. But Jimmy positively seemed to revel in that abuse. It made him look cheerful --and Donkin had a pair of old sea boots thrown at him. 'Here, you East-end trash', boomed Wait, 'you may have that'. 33

Donkin is not impressed by Wait for precisely the opposite reasons from those of Singleton. Donkin is through and through a child of darkness, a political agitator of the meanest and vilest calibre--an impregnable fortress of evil which is incorruptible precisely because it is the most corrupt. Kurtz is an idealist who has degenerated while Donkin is a degenerate who tries to use idealism to spread his moral cancer over the whole 'Narcissus'. We are presented with his traits the moment he comes on deck. Unlike Wait he does not inspire awe but mere contempt and by linking him with the incipient mutiny Conrad was linking him with the pitiable anarchists of The

Secret Agent. The author's contempt for Donkin appears to be matched only by his fascination with the calm, cool, towering and superb negro who degenerates into a stalking death. The contempt for Donkin seems to be the author's contempt for human insincerity as such:

They all knew him. Is there a spot on earth where such a man is unknown, an ominous survival testifying to the eternal fitness of lies and impudence? A taciturn long-armed shellback, with hooked fingers, who had been lying on his back smoking, turned to examine him ~~dispassionately~~ *dispassion*, then, over his head, sent a long jet of clear saliva towards the door. They all knew him! He was the man that cannot steer, that dodges the work of dark nights; that aloft holds on frantically with both arms and legs, and swears at the wind, the sleet and the darkness; the man who curses the sea while others work. The man who is the last out and the first in when all hands are called. The man who can't do most things and won't do the rest. The pet of philanthropists and self-seeking landlubbers. The sympathetic and deserving creature that knows all about his rights, but knows nothing of courage, of endurance and of the unexpressed faith, of the unspoken loyalty that knits together a ship's company. The independent offspring of the ignoble freedom of the slums full of disdain and hate for the austere servitude of the sea. ³⁴

In this passage is to be found the author's hatred of that which breaks bonds of friendship, courage and endurance. It is, in my view, not James Wait against whom the author's contempt is directed. It is this child of darkness, Donkin. James Wait has the honour of being coequal with the elements--they are both neutral forces eliciting men's conscience. They both bring out an ambivalence of the best and the worst in human consciousness. But Donkin, this refuse from the slums, this "wraith from the back of nowhere"³⁵ is the force directly opposed

to the patriarch Singleton. The sailors in this trial by water must veer between him as representing total darkness and Singleton representing total light. They must, like the hero of Pilgrim's Progress, wander between valleys of desolation, valleys of the shadow of death and the delectable mountains of truth. They must fight the temptations from a stalking death as well as the temptations to anarchy to an incipient revolt. Donkin stands for all that is Satanic in man while Singleton stands for virtue. The sailors' conscience must be wracked by both forces and Wait's imminent death is one occasion on which this comes to the fore. When Singleton the prophet says Wait will die, Donkin the tempter shows how such a thing is obvious since all of us must die.³⁶ The sailors are thrown into confusion as all souls assisted by grace--here the author's grace, are often in such a turmoil and if any sentence were needed to sum up Conrad's view of his beloved sailors, it is the one which comes at the end of the book.

The dark knot of sea-men drifted in sunshine.³⁷

I have derived mostly religious significance from the story. It moves on several levels but I have no doubt in my mind about which level agrees with the author's conception. In the chapter on the "brooding gloom" I will show why. Conrad was looking for a meaning in an existence that had taken up half of his life and produced the other half:

Haven't we, together and upon the immortal sea,
 wrung out a meaning from our sinful lives?
 Goodbye brothers! You were a good crowd.³⁸

To wring a meaning out of existence is to have descended into a tumultuous depth of consciousness and to have judged oneself from that depth. To do this is to attain the self-discovery in Heart of Darkness and the permanent grace in The Nigger of the "Narcissus".

From the visible light of Europe we enter into the visible darkness of Africa and from the visible darkness of Africa we enter into the essential darkness of Europe. From the simplicity of the concrete we are led on to the complexity of the abstract and the invisible. Things are not what they seem and the platitudes and sanctimonious declarations of human intentions are no more responsible for the little goodness there is in the universe than are their hidden prejudices, biases and fears. Perhaps in the final analysis men need to reckon not with the apparent accomplishments of the conscious will but with that inscrutable self within, who is really the final arbiter of good and evil. In the next part of the thesis I will use the novel Nostromo to show how this inscrutable self erases the differences between idealism and nihilism.

- CHAPTER II -

- ILLUSIONS AND THE NIHILISM OF THE IDEALISTS -

For Joseph Conrad an unexamined conscience appears to be no better than a vehicle of gigantic illusions which when shattered may leave the bearer with an ultimate and irredeemable nullity. Feats of achievement such as the resuscitation and development of the Gould Concession in Nostromo are shown to have been built on sand because the powers ascribed to them are as futile as the mythology at the opening of the book. Men like Charles Gould and Nostromo do not commit suicide as Martin Decoud does, but they too recognise the emptiness of their hopes and the futility of their efforts long before they cease to exist. They are hollow men whose parched souls cling to the trappings of noble purposes long after the nobility of such purposes has ceased to inspire them--if only because it never existed in the first place. They should both follow Captain Brierly's example in Lord Jim, creep twenty feet underground and stay there.

In Nostromo, the author's skepticism is built around that touchstone of illusions, that "imperium in imperio", the Gould Concession. By constantly showing his characters' attitudes to this central symbol of corruption, darkness, decay, sterility and death, Conrad dissects the platitudes, the hypocrisy and the ambivalence of all idealism and nihilism in the narrative, thereby repudiating his characters' self-deception as fiercely as he repudiated the crude colonialism in Heart

of Darkness. Here, however, the author's skepticism is pervasive. We first see President-Dictator Ribeira upside-down, that is, after he has been overthrown by his enemies. The writer of the main body of the narrative is a skeptic who later kills himself because he cannot believe even in his skepticism. The final judgement of the author has none of the glory to the martyr that we see in Lord Jim. Instead, as we close the book there remains before us that sorrowful picture of Emilia Gould stifled by glittering jewels and starving emotions, the Occidental Republic changed by the capital of Holroyd and his friend but as ever simmering with an incipient rebellion, and Linda Viola and her flirtatious sister Giselle mourning for a Captain Fidanza corrupted by silver long before his violent death at the hand of the old Garibaldino who had always regarded him as a son. So pervasive is Conrad's skepticism here that he might as well be reversing a certain notorious saying by thus applying it to his Godforsaken Costaguana:

Intra Costaguanam nulla salus.¹

The Gould Concession helps Conrad to show us that illusions are a weird jungle of hopes and fears pinned to forces that cannot create an enduring order out of the chaotic essence of existence. In that sense, Costaguana is a microcosm which shows that the macrocosm of which it is a part simply exists, that reality is just real, unchanged by either optimism or pessimism. To believe passionately that either idealism or pessimism or nihilism, dictatorship or liberalism, nationalism or imperialism, material interests or patriotic fervour such as that of Don Jose Avellanos, indeed, to believe that any single force, human

or material can calm the turbulent affairs of Costaguana is to worship an illusion. Conrad finds in the Gould Concession the case of one huge mistaken identity which reveals the underlying motives of people in Costaguana, United States, Europe and the whole world. Just as in Heart of Darkness all Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz, so also in Nostromo the whole world gets involved in the Gould Concession: Blancos, Negroes, Italians, Germans, Englishmen, Chinese, Frenchmen, all men.

We first meet the Concession as a mythical treasure that imprisons all who seek it. It is characterised by sterility, and the area where it is to be found "has not soil enough to grow a single blade of grass, as if it were blighted by a curse."² Myth has associated the treasure of the Azueras with two lost Americanos who are supposed to be "spectral and alive; dwelling to this day amongst the rocks, under the fatal spell of their success. They are now rich and hungry and thirsty--a strange theory of tenacious gringo ghosts suffering in their starved and parched flesh of defiant heretics, where a Christian would have renounced and been released."³

We have here another variation of the statement that salvation will be missing from Costaguana. It is not, however, as telling as the one which sums up the physical features of Costaguana as a place of the damned:

The few stars left below the seaward frown of the vault shine feebly into the mouth of a black cavern. In its vastness your ship floats unseen under your feet, her sails flutter invisible above your head. The eye

of God Himself--they add with grim profanity --could not find out what work a man's hand is doing there; and you will be free to call the devil to your aid with impunity if even his malice were not defeated by such a blind darkness. ⁴

The streak of myth associated with the treasure is enhanced by the robbers led by Hernandez who think that Charles Gould is a saint and by the Indians who regard the mine as a fetish:

They invested it with a protecting and invincible virtue as though it were a fetish made by their own hands, for they were ignorant, and in other respects did not differ appreciably from the rest of mankind which puts infinite trust in its own creations. It never entered the alcade's head that the mine could fail in its protection and force. ⁵

Conrad shows that all the illusions in the book are really based on characters regarding the Gould Concession in this crudely idolatrous manner. To the last of the Corbelans, for example, true peace in Costa-guana means the restoration of the property taken away from Mother Church. To Don Jose Avellanos the Gould Concession is a patriotic undertaking, whereas to the man who really loves Emilia Gould, the nihilist Dr. Monygham, the Gould Concession is Emilia:

The Doctor was loyal to the mine. It presented itself to his fifty-years' old eyes in the shape of a little woman in a soft dress with a long train, with a head attractively overweighted by a great mass of fair hair and the delicate preciousness of her inner worth, partaking of a gem and a flower, revealed in every attitude of her person. It claimed him at last! This claim, exalted by a spiritual detachment from the usual sanction of hope and reward, made Dr. Monygham's thinking, acting, individuality ex-

tremely dangerous to himself and to others, all his scruples vanishing in the proud feeling that his devotion was the only thing that stood between an admirable woman and a frightful disaster.⁶

For Dr. Monygham this illusion is temporary. He is one of the three people who are not wholly taken in by the hopes and fears pinned to the Gould Concession. He is honest enough to tell Emilia that Costaguana's turmoils cannot be ended by material interests:

No, there is no peace and no rest in the development of material interests. They have their law and their justice. But it is founded on expediency and is inhuman; it is without rectitude, without the continuity and the force that can be found only in a moral principle. Mrs. Gould, the time approaches when all that the Gould Concession stands for shall weigh as heavily upon the people as the barbarism, cruelty, and misrule of a few years back.⁷

This perceptive remark, as we shall see, is in direct contradiction to the hope which rockets Charles Gould into the feat of revitalising the Gould Concession until its treasure becomes a formidable force in the land. Monygham sees a moral principle outside material interests, Charles Gould and Holroyd do not. In the true tradition of 'laissez faire' capitalism they have a Darwinian view of economics. The 'survival of the fittest' to them will mean the survival of an economic entity morally satisfactory to society and the whole drama of Nostromo shows that Conrad did not believe in this, that he makes Charles Gould stick to a proposition which the book refutes:

What is wanted here is law, good faith, order, security. Anyone can declaim about these things but I pin my faith to material interest.

Only let the material interests once get a firm footing and they are bound to impose the conditions on which alone they can continue to exist. That's how your money-making is justified here in the face of the lawlessness and disorder. It is justified because the security which it demands must be shared with an oppressed people. A better justice will come afterwards.⁸

The fact is that no better justice ever comes. The game of politics is more than ever centred around the Concession and the Concession provokes men's greed and men's intrigue. Conrad makes it clear that at a certain point Charles Gould is on the threshold of self-recognition but that as a true tragic figure of the stature of Shakespeare's Macbeth, he chooses to go on:

Charles Gould was competent because he had no illusions. The Gould Concession had to fight for life with such weapons as could be found at once in the mire of corruption that was so universal as to almost lose its significance. He was prepared to stoop for his weapons. For a moment he felt as if the silver mine, which had killed his father, had decoyed him further than he meant to go; and with the roundabout logic of emotions, he felt that the worthiness of his life was bound up with success. There was no going back.⁹

Charles Gould's supreme illusion rests on "the roundabout logic of emotions." It is this motivation which blinds him from what is apparent to us all--that he is no better a Costaguanian than are the ministers in Sta. Marta. He fails to realise that he is as subject to the silver's corrupting influence as they are and that he can die morally from the same causes that physically killed his father. He believes that he can extricate himself from the mire of corruption into which he has sunk against his principles. He fails to see that his attachment to the

San Tome mine is not as rational as he supposes it to be and that it is no less idolatrous than that of the Indians who regarded the mine as a fetish. In this respect Charles Gould is like Joseph K. of The Trial. He recognizes the absurdity of the universe around him without recognizing a streak of that absurdity in himself. Despite his talk about money-making justifying itself by the order and stability which it brings, we are shown quite clearly the evolution of his attachment to the mine. It starts off as a child's wonder at the monster that destroys his father:

To be told repeatedly that one's future is blighted because of the possession of a silver mine is not, at the age of fourteen, a matter of prime importance as to its main statement, but in its form it is calculated to excite a certain amount of wonder and attention. ¹⁰

Then we are shown how this wonder and attention develop into a fascination with mines in general and into the resolution to study mining engineering. The sufferings in Costaguana have meanwhile been centred around Uncle Harry's execution by Guzman Bento. The young man likes the San Tome mine because it is a mine, not because it can bring stability and order to Costaguana. The latter motive is a sophistication of the man who cannot bring to the surface his real motives. As Martin Decoud tells us, Charles' declared motive is an idealisation of a perfectly down-to-earth undertaking. Martin Decoud tells us that Charles Gould cannot

act or exist without idealising every simple feeling, desire or achievement. He could not

believe his own motives if he did not make them first a part of some fairy tale. The earth is not quite good enough for him, I fear. ¹¹

The irony in this statement consists in the fact that Charles Gould himself thinks that he idealises nothing, and that he simply does what in his thinking is the best thing to do for his country. That his attachment to the San Tome mine has an emotional basis which is capable of pre-empting other emotions has never crossed his mind. He makes fun of Holroyd's oratory by comparing it to the patriotic rhetoric of Don Jose Avellanos:

There's a good deal of eloquence of one sort or another produced in both Americas. The air of the New World seems favourable to the art of declamation. ¹²

It never occurs to him that his own hopes about the power of "material interests" is part of this American eloquence. It has simply never touched him that his obsession with mines in Europe is the real basis of his single-minded devotion to the San Tome mine:

Mines had acquired for him a dramatic interest. He studied their peculiarities from a personal point of view, too, as one would study the varied characters of men. He visited them as one goes with curiosity to call upon remarkable persons. He visited mines in Germany, in Spain, in Cornwall. Abandoned workings had for him strong fascination. Their desolation appealed to him like the sight of human misery, whose causes are varied and profound. ¹³

This passage is important in understanding why Charles Gould, threatened with a take-over of his mine by Monterist forces, decides on what appears to us to be the most irresponsible nihilism that an idealist like him

could choose. He makes preparations for the destruction of the mine irrespective of what happens to the workers and all the people who had come to regard the mine as their source of livelihood. These preparations were the only way in which an emotional, not a rational attachment to the mine could be appeased. Charles Gould no longer is the idealist whose silent eloquence has become a force in Costaguana. He is a lover whose object of attachment also happens to be something with tremendous potential for good. We see him from two opposed angles which neutralise each other. We see him as the idealist promoter of the new age in Costaguana and we see him as the irresponsible nihilist avenging his devotion to his ideals by a readiness to destroy his "Imperium in Imperio," thereby increasing the pandemonium in his country. What comes out is the fact that he never cared for Costaguana in the first place. He never really cared for anything except mines. In this is to be found not only the cause for his readiness to destroy the San Tome mine but also the underlying reason for his "subtle infidelity" to Emilia. In the end we realise that he had never given her his whole devotion and that her anguished revelation to Gizella Viola summed up all the bitterness of her being given second place to "material interests,"

I have been loved, too, ¹⁴

Conrad traces the Gould's courtship so as to show how it, too, had to be part of the "Imperium in Imperio" and how it had to reach its ups and downs according to Charles' devotion to "material interests;"

The two young people had met in Lucca. After that meeting Charles Gould visited no mines,

though they went together in a carriage, once, to see some marble quarries, where the work resembled mining in so far as it was also the tearing of the raw material of the treasure of the earth. ¹⁵

Conrad associates Charles with quarries and marbles in such a way as to bring out the man's detachment from human emotions, a detachment that carries as much sterility and lifeless indifference as stones and marbles. Towards the end of the book we find this sterility yawning at Emilia with all its heart-rending coexistence cheek by jowl with immense wealth and social prestige. The fascination which has ousted Emilia from her husband's heart is by then clear to us all. Conrad introduces Emilia soon after introducing Charles' fascination with mines. This becomes the hierarchy of Charles' affections: Emilia knows the hierarchy but is at first moved by it because it shows a combination of the idealist and the lover:

His future wife was the first, and perhaps the only person to detect this secret mood which governed the profoundly sensible, almost voiceless attitude of this man towards material things. And at once her delight in him, lingering with half-open wings like those birds that cannot rise easily from a flat level, found a pinnacle from which to soar up into the skies. ¹⁶

The irony here is that Emilia's delight is to remain at a flat level for the better part of her life. It will in fact evolve into a suppressed bitterness that gushes out at Giselle Viola, "I have been loved, too." ¹⁷

Conrad makes sure that we see Emilia's starved emotions both through the man who loved her in silence, Dr. Monygham, and through outright

statements such as the one probing Emilia's consciousness:

Had anybody asked her of what she was thinking, alone in the garden of the casa, with her husband at the mine, and the house closed, her frankness would have had to evade the question...

...Mrs. Gould's face became set and rigid for a second as if to receive, without flinching, a great wave of loneliness that swept over her head....incorrigible the last of the Corbelans, the last of the Avellanos, the doctor had said; but she saw clearly the San Tome mine possessing, consuming, burning up the life of the last of the Costaguana Gould; mastering the energetic spirit of the son as it had mastered the lamentable weakness of the father. A terrible success of the last of the Goulds. The last! She had hoped for a long, long time that perhaps--But no! There were to be no more. An immense desolation, the dread of her own continued life, descended upon the first lady of Sulaco. 18

Charles Gould's detachment from the vibrating nearness of human emotions has brought desolation on Emilia. The very "imperium in imperio" to which he devotes his emotions, his principles and his energy becomes the most destructive force in his relationship with the person he is supposed to love. There enters into his idealism a certain passionate intensity which acts out the central sterility of all his life. Contrasted with this sterility Emilia's real knowledge of Costaguaneros as human beings stands as a criticism of the whole Messianic role that Gould and his friends in San Francisco and London assume. Emilia sets out to do good because it is good and succeeds in captivating the hearts of all Costaguaneros. Charles sets out to do good as a corol-

lary to material interests and succeeds in arousing hatred against "these material interests of the foreigners."²⁰ The basic difference in approach to moral aims produces a difference in the final result. Emilia stands alone because she loves deeply and loves without the sophistication of disguised childhood fancies and hopes for monetary gains. Charles Gould stands alone because in disguising a simple fascination (with mines and with monetary gains) by a love of law and order he ends up loving nobody and respecting neither law nor order. We begin by peeling out an idealist and end up with a monomaniac who is a nihilist in all emotions and all views except those touching his mine. There is, in fact, a mocking and savage irony in Conrad's statement that the Goulds' "was a successful match."¹⁹ How can the match be successful when all those jingling spurs and saddled horses, all that silent rhetoric about law and order, stand as a barrier between them? The match is as successful as the Senor Administrador's detachment from throbbing emotions can allow. We never see these two people sharing a moment of bliss which is not brought to an end by the intrusion of material interests. Charles Gould is as incapable of human love as

Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
 From heav'n, for ev'n in Heav'n his looks and thoughts
 Were always downward bent, admiring more
 The riches of Heav'n's pavement, trodden Gold,
 In vision beatific: by him first
 Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
 Ransacked the center, and with impious hands
 Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth
 For Treasures better hid ²¹

That a character as sterile as Charles should also be the exponent of a well-planned idealism suited Conrad's irony well. The shivering godhead in Heart of Darkness is an exponent of an idealism which colonial powers expounded to the world 'ad nauseam'. There the idealist is hollow at the core, thereby making his statements empty lucubrations of an insincere pen. We cannot, however, charge Charles Gould with insincerity. We can only call him sterile because he mistakes a component of his emotional make-up for a rational intention, thereby unbalancing both his reason and his emotions. He has not examined his conscience, and in the hectic hurry to find a mistress for the Casa Gould so as to resuscitate the Gould Concession, who can blame him? I was being inaccurate when I said that material interests create a barrier between him and his wife. I should have said that they take precedence over his wife. For a time she is their substitute and he visits no more mines. Then his father dies, the material interests come to the fore and he asks her to come with him so far away--he asks her to marry him. She shows him her sympathy on the death of his father in all the sincerity of tender love--and he is preoccupied with a symbol of material interests, a broken urn:

She was too startled to say anything, he was contemplating with a penetrating and motionless state at the cracked marble urn as though he had resolved to fix its shape for ever in his memory. It was only when, turning suddenly to her, he blurted out twice, 'I've come straight to you--I've come straight to you--,' without being able to finish his phrase, that the great pitifulness of that lonely and tor-

mented death in Costaguana came to her with the full force of its misery. He caught hold of her hand, raised it to his lips, and at that she dropped her parasol to pat him on the cheek, murmured 'Poor boy' and began to dry her eyes under the downward curve of her hat-brim, very small in her simple, white frock, almost like a small child crying in the degraded grandeur of the noble hall, while he stood by her, again perfectly motionless in the contemplation of the marble urn. 22

We have here a portrait of this couple which remains unchanged to the end of the book. The man contemplates material interests symbolised by the cracked marble urn while the woman stands alone, a small, frail, simple vehicle of deep emotions and unshakeable nobility of mind. Here is a contradiction within one family which symbolises the unending contradictions of Costaguana and indeed of the whole world. Conrad seems to ask, "if Costaguana can be centred around such a contradiction, how can it stand?" How can a living community be centred around emotional sterility and be stable? The uncrowned "El Roy de Sulaco" fails in exactly the opposite direction in which Kurtz fails and in which the Capataz of the Cargadores loses himself. The latter has no abstraction of his historical role while both Charles Gould and Kurtz abstract their historical role and fail in opposite directions. Charles brings what he thinks is light to Costaguana whereas Kurtz loses the light he is supposed to bring to Africa and promotes the darkness of the heart. Both of them crucify the women they love, the one by withdrawing to material interests and the other by paying only lip-service to his "intended" while he is giving himself to the heart of

darkness. Conrad dramatises Charles Gould's absorption in the abstraction of his historical role by comparing him to the statue found in the centre of Sulaco which stands above sleeping leperos showing Charles IV "with his marble arm raised towards the marble rim of a plumed hat."²³ This continued association of Gould with marble would seem to say that the illusion on which Charles Gould's outward glory, competence and power rest is based on stones, not on love of mankind.

The weather-stained effigy of the mounted king, with its vague suggestion of a saluting gesture, seemed to present an inscrutable breast to the political changes which had robbed it of its very name; but neither did the other horseman, well-known to the people, keen and alive on his well-shaped, slate-coloured breast with a white eye, wear his heart on the sleeve of his English coat.²⁴

The vaguely saluting gesture of a statue dramatises the scant notice which the present "El Roy de Sulaco" takes of men who are not mere abstractions and this too is a source of failure. I am not denying that the Sulaco we see at the end of the book is more tolerable than the one we see at the beginning. I am not denying, above all, that this change can be attributed to material interests. I am only saying that the change is insignificant because it has failed to impress all sections of the community. In other words, Charles Gould's detachment from personal communication has made his declared motives suspect. The assembly which asks him to help them welcome Montero is disappointed by his response and the impression given is that he cares only for his silver. The dictatorship which he helped bring to power

has collapsed. The Occidental Republic which takes its place is seething with resentment against "material interests." Charles Gould has immersed himself in the affairs of Costaguana while remaining detached from its hopes and fears, its essential misery and triumphs. He regards all these hopes as illusions, unaware that his own material interests are the greatest of these illusions. They crush Emilia and they achieve their own survival more than the survival of Costaguana:

She saw the San Tome mine hanging over the Campo, over the whole land, feared, hated, wealthy; more soulless than any tyrant, more pitiless and autocratic than the worst government; ready to crush innumerable lives in the expansion of its greatness. He did not see it. He could not see it. It was not his fault, He was perfect; but she could never have him for herself. Never. 25

Emilia has become our guide into the unexamined conscience of her husband. As the unwilling victim of her husband's obsession with the silver, she has had both the bitterness and the fairness to report on her husband's progressive barricading of himself into his material interests. With bitter irony she defends her husband by taking the attitude of one who sees his view:

It had come into her mind that for life to be large and full, it must contain the care of the past and of the future in every passing moment of the present. Our daily work must be done to the glory of the dead and for the good of those who come after. 26

Still, this rationalisation of the cause of her suffering does not diminish her isolation. We sympathise with her all the more because

of all the sensitive souls in the book she and the Garibaldino Viola embrace the ethic of hope which sizes up human failings and still clings to human love. Conrad makes her the protector of the old Garibaldino who in his tempering of the abstract with the throbbing instinctual stands alone. He has suffered for his republicanism, has seen it betrayed by kings and emperors, yet still retains hope in human liberty. He has seen the fickle changes of the masses and still wishes to make Nostromo his adopted son. His devotion to a historical ideal never robs him of his human emotions yet he concludes Nostromo's tragedy in the act of defending Giselle's honour. He it is, more than Don Jose Avellanosa, who must be regarded as representing a balance that Conrad felt reasonable in a human being. He despises riches but is not too idealistic to thank the English senora for keeping a roof over his daughters' heads. We also have in Viola's admiration an explanation of Emilia's magic over Costaguana. She senses the needs of existing people like Viola and even changes the course of a railway line in doing so because a railway line takes care of people in the abstract. This then is what makes her stand alone--a contemplation of time not merely as an abstraction of the future and the past but as a living present. Viola too is isolated by this ability to give value to the present because it is the present, not just a transition from past into future. His past is remarkable, he was one of the closest men to Garibaldi, but this does not make him despise the present which is essentially an era of the new imperialism.

He has an affection for the English not only because one of their ladies looked after Garibaldi in his illness but also because an Englishman gave him a Bible--to him a compendium of republican wisdom. And now there is Dona Emilia giving him a roof above his head. The Garibaldino embraces the human touch in Emilia and the abstract principle in Charles. There are illusions in the old Garibaldino, too, but it seems Conrad's point is that they constitute a well-lived life devoted to hope and to love. The Garibaldino has not discarded his spark of light as Kurtz did and he has not sacrificed his loved ones to the light that he carries as Charles does. Rather has he like Emilia fused idealism with love. He is indeed victimised by the silver through Nostromo but his victimisation, though tragic, does not act out the author's skepticism in the way the lives of Charles Gould, Decoud and Nostromo do. Old Viola, like Dona Emilia, balances his belief in an absolute, the absolute of human freedom under republican rule by a spontaneous contemplation of the older demands of his heart--love, generosity, gratitude. Old Viola lives a rounded life, the life of military campaigns, disappointed hopes, family bonds. He is not a petrified Gerontion clinging to rocks in order to realise the absolutes of law, order, justice. Viola, I maintain, is the counterpart of Stein in Lord Jim and would in all probability have endorsed Stein's wisdom on how to be:

A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb out into the air as inexperienced people endeavour to do he drowns.... No!

I tell you! The way is to the destructive element submit yourself, and with the exertions of your ^{hands} ~~hazards~~ and feet in the water make the deep, deep sea keep you up. So if you ask me--how to be?... I will tell you. ... In the destructive element immerse.²⁷

It would then seem that Conrad's skepticism is not directed against illusions per se so much as against men's tendency to impress others with the paramountcy of their illusions. It is true that Viola stands alone because later generations of Italians do not see as much historical significance in Garibaldi's exploits as he does. But Conrad admires him as a man who has followed a dream and come to accept the world as it is. He has "a gloomy doubt of ever being able to understand the ways of Divine justice. He did not deny it, however. It required patience, he would say. Though he disliked priests, and would not put his foot inside a church for anything, he believed in God...."²⁸ After discussing the old man's devotion to Garibaldi's cause, Conrad speaks of the cause of the old man's gloom:

Too many kings and emperors flourished yet in the world which God had meant for the people. Georgio was sad because of his simplicity.²⁸

Both Emilia and Georgio, devoted as they are to certain absolutes which they still manage to refine with their devotion to the present, are a direct commentary on the obsessive idealists and nihilists in the book. Emilia is such a commentary on Dr. Monygham that he falls in love with her. Georgio Viola to me seems a commentary on the patriot Avellanos. This ex-Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court

of St. James comes out exceedingly well until we see him frail and broken presiding over a Committee of the Provincial Assembly formed "for the protection of life and property" before the new rulers should take over. It is then that one realises that diplomacy, even the diplomacy of a burning patriot, can cover a multitude of sins. For then do we realise that this old man, who was imprisoned and released at the whim of Guzman Bento, has sacrificed too much honesty for the Blanco party. He has hailed Don Carlos and Donna Emilia as patriots even though Don Carlos in engineering the revolution which brings about the Ribeira regime has no patriotism to think of. He is solely concerned with material interests. Avellanos supervises the division of the largesse of corruption handed out by Charles Gould and has organised the purchase of guns which Decoud brings over. He disguises all corruption, all foreign domination and all meaningless gestures under patriotic rhetoric. The distillation of his historical and political knowledge which Conrad gives out as an example of fairminded scholarship is, in fact, an evasive compendium that excuses everyone including the dictator Guzman Bento:

Yet this monster, imbrued in the blood of his countrymen, must not be held unreservedly to the execration of future years. It appears to be true that he, too, loved his country. He had given it twelve years of peace; and, absolute master of lives and fortunes that he was, he died poor. His worst fault, perhaps, was not his ferocity, but his ignorance.²⁹

In Don Jose Avellanos, then, Conrad is not attacking an idealistic devotion to patriotism so much as that excess of the milk of human

kindness, which is simply the absence of principles in the choice of means. In excusing everyone, Don Jose excuses his own weaknesses. His unexamined conscience allows him to veer with every wind. He stands before us a broken patriot whose chief fault lay in not standing up too strongly against anything that enhanced his patriotism. We have here, as in Don Carlos, a staunch idealist whose devotion makes him a nihilist in all things except patriotism. Perhaps his experiences as a diplomat inclined him towards compromise, but a man who compromises on everything, closing his eyes to corruption and double-dealing as if they mean nothing morally, compromises too much and ceases to be an idealist and in fact becomes a nihilist. Conrad dismisses Don Jose as a saviour of Castaguana not only by the overthrowing of the Ribierist cause but also by the destruction of his book, Fifty Years of Misrule, while Avellanos is at one of his compromising acts--preparing to receive Montero. Martin Decoud walks up to him and accuses the Assembly of preparing to surrender:

----- Only Don Jose hid his face in his hand muttering, 'Never, Never!' But as I looked at him, it seemed to me that I could have blown him away with my breath, he looked so frail, so weak, so worn out. Whatever happens he will not survive. The deception is too great for a man of his age; and hasn't he seen the sheets of 'Fifty Years of Misrule' which we have begun printing on the presses of the Porvenir, littering the Plaza, floating in the gutters, fired out as wads for trabucos loaded with handfuls of type, blown in the wind, trampled in the mud? I have seen pages floating upon the very waters of the harbour. It would be unreasonable to expect him to sur-

vive. It would be cruel. 30

Don Jose Avellanos' ability to canonise saints and sinners alike, provided that they enhance patriotism, is an uncontrollable optimism born of a futuristic view of time that seems to deny validity to the present except as a transition from the past into the future. This, as we can see, is a view opposed to that of Emilia Gould where the present also has value. The patriot Avellanos continues to matter through his daughter Antonia, an unrealised perfection, and through the Cardinal-Archbishop of Sulaco, his brother-in-law. Don Jose's labours have not been in vain but we must forego the conclusion "post hoc, ergo propter hoc." The new Occidental Republic happens after his efforts, not because of his efforts. I can imagine this impeccable historian and diplomatist eulogising Montero had he found himself in a Republic pacified by Montero, and not in an Occidental Republic created by the Gould Concession.

For Joseph Conrad, all men have and need illusions, but they need not have absolute identification with the object of their illusions. A balanced outlook on things demands that idealism be so real that it include attention to the world as it is or else it becomes a self-deception that leads to nihilism. Illusions are our truth because on them we base our values. They distinguish us from those beings which can erect no values. Conrad, in a way, is acting out the "Diogenes Teufelsdröck" theme of Carlyle's Sartor Resartus. A man that is born is a "child of a god" looking up to infinite perfection while at the

same time attracted by the natural that can be regarded as "the devil's dung." It is the old theme of reason versus impulse which demands that a denial of the validity of the one result in the disorganization of the other. In Nostromo the author's skepticism probes into the mechanism of such a denial. Men destroy part of themselves for the sake of some generalized concern for mankind or for some absolute such as "to be well thought of by people" as in the case of Nostromo. To quote Robert Penn Warren:

Conrad's skepticism is ultimately but a 'reasonable' recognition of the fact that man is a natural creature who can rest on no revealed values and can look forward to neither individual immortality nor racial survival. But reason, in this sense, is the denial of life and energy, for against all reason man insists, as man, on creating and trying to live by certain values. These values are, to use Conrad's word, "illusions," but the last wisdom is for man to realise that though his values are illusions, the illusion is necessary, is infinitely precious, is the mark of his human achievement, and is, in the end, his only truth. 31

I have examined the denial in so far as it is exercised by Charles Gould and Don Jose. In the latter's case an apparant acceptance of both reason and impulse hides a denial of both. Don Jose never bursts into a condemnation of what his conscience disapproves. He accommodates the unpleasant by finding what is good in it in order to enhance patriotism. That stifles his impulses and renders the object of his reason unattainable. Georgio Viola on the other hand lets his reason, his idealism, sustain him through the unhappy days of a spir-

itual wasteland:

Even when he was cooking for the 'Signori Inglesi'--.....he was, as it were, under the eye of the great man who had led him in a glorious struggle where, under the walls of Gaeta, tyranny would have expired for ever had it not been for that accursed Piedmontese race of Kings and ministers. When sometimes a frying-pan caught fire during a delicate operation with some shredded onions the name of Cavour the archintriguer sold to kings and tyrants --could be heard in imprecations against the China girls, cooking in general and the brute of a country where he was ~~freed~~ ^{reduced} to live for the love of liberty that traitor had strangled. 32

This acceptance of the trials of life under the aegis of Apollonian hopes and hatreds, this living in a valley of tears "sub specie aeternitatis" is what seems missing in Costaguana. The Gould Concession does not help matters by accomplishing Charles' dream in such a way as to be the one central chimera in a pandemonium of revolutions. Long after the Occidental Republic is born, we see

the San Tome mountain hanging over the Campo, over the whole land, feared, hated, wealthy; more soulless than any tyrant, more pitiless and autocratic than the worst Government, ready to crush innumerable lives in the expansion of its greatness. 33

This regeneration as a nightmare more frightful than the one which killed Gould the father makes the Concession a repugnant touchstone of the morality of all the idealists in the book. Let us take Holroyd. To him the whole project is a pet to be ^{resorted} ~~restored~~ to on a holiday advised by doctors and afterwards for twenty-minutes or so every month. The

pet is worthwhile because the man on the spot is interesting. Then, of course, there is the need for "a purer form of Christianity" achieved by the lavish endowment of Churches. Towards the end of the book this need has become a Protestant Missionary Society competing with the Vatican and the Cardinal-Archbishop of Sulaco. Holroyd obeys both his impulses and his reason. He would be the man with the dream and the reality, except for one thing--he does not present his dream as it really is and even his impulses are as idolatrous as those of the Indians who think that the San Tome mine is a fetish. Our guide to his real views is Emilia Gould whose marriage to a worshipper of illusions makes her an expert in seeing people's intentions:

Mr. Holroyd's sense of religion was shocked and disgusted at the tawdriness of the dressed-up saints in the cathedral--the worship, he called it, of wood and tinsel. But it seemed to me that he looked upon his own God as a sort of influential partner, who gets his share of profits in the endowment of Churches. That's a sort of idolatry I believe he's really a good man but so stupid. A poor Chulo who offers a little silver arm or leg to think his God for a cure is as rational and more touching. ³⁴

Emilia Gould has here put her finger on Holroyd's belief in destiny which at that time only satisfied itself with the prolific endowment of Churches. Had Conrad already at that time seen how the "temperament of a Puritan and an insatiable imagination"³⁵ would put America where she is today? An irrelevant point, maybe, but quite interesting. Holroyd has "the profile of a Caesar's head on an old Roman coin"³⁶ and the Gould Concession is "a matter of no great consequence to him"³⁷

referring as he does to a prodigious destiny:

Now, what is Costaguana? It is the bottomless pit of 10 per cent loans and other fool investments. European capital has been flung into it with both hands for years. Not ours, though. We in this country know just about enough to keep indoors when it rains. We can sit and watch. Of course, some day we shall step in. We are bound to. But there's no hurry. Time itself has got to wait on the greatest country in the whole of God's Universe. We shall be giving the word for everything: industry, trade, law, journalism, art, politics and religion, from Cape Horn clear over to Smith's Sound, and beyond, too, if anything worth taking hold of turns up at the North Pole. And then we shall have the leisure to take in hand the outlying continents of the earth. We shall run the world's business whether the world likes it or not. The world can't help it--and neither can we, I guess. 38

These words are said in all seriousness. The rhetoric is witty, political. If one did not know that the speaker was also a pious soul who happened to be a steel and silver magnate, one might have ascribed his words to a rabid devotee of the theory of "manifest destiny," that desire not only to move west to California or north to Alaska but to expand all over the globe. Emilia Gould has already warned us that beneath the piety is Holroyd's impulse to dominate and rule, and then to disguise this desire for dominance as a desire for the "purer forms of Christianity." The impulse is power and the reason is morality. These are legitimate and worthwhile pursuits except that when they come drenched in the mist of piety they become an idealism which cannot discriminate its means, an idealism so prepared to stoop

for its weapons that one of its most eloquent faces becomes sheer nihilism. No one will deny that the new imperialism like the crude colonialism in Heart of Darkness is the child of numerous entanglements. What Conrad seems to repudiate both in Heart of Darkness and in Nostromo is the Messianic stance that so many down-to-earth desires are given. Holroyd does not say, "One day Washington, D.C. will be the centre of the world because we also want to taste power." He says, "We shall run the world's business whether the world likes it or not"--as if some historical determinism had decreed that all men should bow to the U.S.A. After all, even today the Americans do not stand alone. There are the Russians and the Chinese.

In a man like Holroyd the impulse to rule and dominate becomes an idealism to allow all men to worship in simplicity--until of course God's greatest country begins to give the word in all aspects of life.

The financier Holroyd seriously believes in his country's destiny. We cannot accuse him of insincerity. His quest for dominance is unconscious. It is we who know what he does not know, that is, "the profile of a Ceasar's head on an old Roman coin." He is as unaware of his emotional bias towards domination as Charles Gould is of his bias towards the world of rocks and minerals. The idealists in this book cannot isolate their impulses from their reason. This can also be said of the nihilist Monygham and Martin Decoud. On the surface one may be tempted to make an exception of the perfect patriot Don Jose Avellanosa but the author gives us sufficient evidence to show that once we probe

deeper into this diplomatist's character and separate his impulses from his ideals, his bedrock self from his persona, the man is no longer what he seems.

In Don Jose Avellanos the impulse to avoid conflict, all conflict, coexists cheek by jowl with the reason, the goal, the value of an undying patriotism. Don Jose's idealism shows a nihilistic face when we bear in mind that he is as steeped in corruption as Charles Gould and the various politicians on the payroll of the Concession. One understands his silence when Martin Decoud indicts the politics of his country in an outburst following Scarfe's fatuous cry against Montero, a cry which shows that the Europeans of Sulaco are concerned far less with Costaguana than with their own material interests. Decoud's outburst is painful to Don Jose Avellanos because it is directed against the state of affairs in Costaguana as much as against the part Don Jose Avellanos has taken in these affairs:

The natural treasures of Costaguana are of importance to the progressive Europe represented by this youth, just as three hundred years ago the wealth of our Spanish fathers was a serious object to the rest of Europe--as represented by the bold Buccaneers. There is a curse of futility upon our character: Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, chivalry and materialism, high-sounding sentiments and a supine morality, violent efforts for an idea and a sullen acquiescence in every form of corruption. We convulsed a continent for our independence only to become the passive prey of a democratic parody, the helpless victims of scoundrels and cut-throats, our institutions a mockery, our laws a farce-- a Guz-

man Bento our master! And we have sunk so low that when a man like you has awakend our conscience, a stupid barbarian of a Montero--Great Heavens! A Montero!--becomes a deadly danger, and an ignorant, boastful Indio, like Barrios is our defender. 39

There is one significant factor behind the power and pathos of Martin Decoud's outburst. It is the keen intellectual coordination of all the absurd bits and pieces of the history of Costaguana. This coordination amounts to a flat denial of any validity to the world of impulses. The new forces of change are made to look no better than the efforts of those other Englishmen of three hundred years earlier --the buccaneers of the Elizabethan era. The fight for independence is made to precede cut-throats and dictators. The generals are all in the category of stupid and ignorant barbarians. The cumulative effect is a gigantic chimera of illusions shorn of all their nobility by being bared to the light of pure reason. One can make all reality and all seriousness look ridiculous by making reason the only reality worth striving after. The result is, of course, a dreary "opera-bouffe" as excruciating as that created by the promoters of material interests. Martin Decoud's overriding illusion is the belief in the self-sufficiency of reason without impulse. It is true that he regards his love for Antonia as his supreme and only illusion. But as we shall see a little later this love falters at the very moment of trial when it should have sustained him. What has gone wrong? I maintain that this love falters because it had excluded

impulses in the first place and that this was one reason for Conrad making Antonia an unrealised perfection, a character seen in the abstract with all the absolutes of perfection--intelligence, charm, devotion, but never like Emilia in her moments of realising these qualities. Antonia appeals to Decoud because of her intellect and Decoud's devotion to her is a devotion to pure reason and all his achievements on her behalf are achievements in the name of pure reason which the author dismisses as one other ineffective scheme of salvation for Costaguana. Decoud makes the blueprint for the Occidental Republic but this comes about through other forces. He edits the Porvenir, brings guns to fight Montero, transports a lighter of silver across the Gulf Placido--all in the name of his supreme illusion, his love for Antonia. The nihilist must hang on to something in the world and for that something he will also cease to discriminate his means, for it has become his only idealism. Thus for Decoud, a political feat such as the severance of Sulaco from the rest of Costaguana must be made to serve his being with Antonia:

She won't leave Sulaco for my sake, therefore Sulaco must leave the rest of the Republic to its fate. Nothing could be clearer than that. I like a clearly defined situation. I cannot part without Antonia, therefore, the one and indivisible Republic of Costaguana must be made to part with its western province. Fortunately it happens to be also a sound policy. 40

The only difference between this attitude and that of the man who makes material interests take precedence over his wife is that the latter has

subjected reason to an ingrained impulse while the former is subjecting reason to reason. Both of them are using Costaguana and all that in its moves for their own selfish ends, and whether reason or impulse be at the bottom of the selfishness becomes irrelevant. Here are idealists who will move the whole world, if need be, to satisfy their own little wants.

It is true that Decoud is as accurate an observer of human motives as, say, Emilia Gould. But he too is directly victimised by the Gould Concession. He meets his death by using bars of silver to take him down to the world of shades. It seems then that even a penetrating awareness of the insidious evils of material interests is not enough to save Decoud from their snare. Because the awareness was purely intellectual, unbacked by impulse, Decoud, too, must meet the solitude of the silver. We begin to see this feeling in the early pages of the letter to his sister written in the Casa Viola:

I have the feeling of a great solitude around me. Is it, perhaps, because I am the only man with a definite idea in his head, in the complete collapse of every resolve, intention and hope about me? 41

This belief in the power of his ideas, this trust in the supremacy of intellect, does not work in Decoud's favour, especially in the company of Nostromo, a believer in the power and supremacy of impulse. It comes out that despite his sneer at the world of impulse Decoud needs this world, needs society for the proper contemplation of his reason. It is not enough to diagnose the world and find it absurd.

One must accept this absurdity and recognise a streak of it in oneself. The irony in Decoud's behaviour is that he feverishly gives himself to a world he does not accept under the pretext of accepting one of its illusions, love. The fact is that he does not accept this illusion either--he accepts the only element of himself in that illusion, reason, pure reason. That is why the failure of reason in Gulf Placido, (truly the river of the dead), becomes also the failure of his love, inducing in him an indifference to the external world:

All his active sensations and feelings from as far back as he could remember seemed to him the maddest of dreams. Even his passionate devotion to Antonia into which he had waked himself up out of the depths of his skepticism had lost all appearance of reality. For a moment he was the prey of an extremely languid but not unpleasant indifference. 42

A love born of impulses and reason would have seen Decoud through his solitude but his love for Antonia fails to do this. It depends far too much on reason. When we see Decoud and Antonia together we see reason trying to build a wall between them, a wall less conspicuous, maybe, but no less potent than that between Emilia and Charles. Even had Decoud lived, his skepticism would have seen to the death of his communication with Antonia. Decoud's description of his love in the letter to his sister is worth examining here. Antonia does not set his heart on fire. She sets his brain on fire and she is far more to him than a Church and a mine:

My dear girl, there is that in Antonia which would make me believe in the feasibility of

anything. One look at her face is enough to set my brain on fire. And yet I love her as any other man would--with the heart, and with that alone. She is more to me than his Church to Father Corbelan She is more to me than his precious mine to that sentimental Englishman. ⁴³

It is significant that Decoud realises the insufficiency of his "brain love" to Antonia and so on second thoughts adds a yet weaker qualification--"as any other man would." Having added that weak qualification, he dilutes his love still further by irrelevant comparisons which again bring the dominance of what is cerebral over what is emotional. Again it becomes apparent that Decoud's illusion rests on the belief that reason can make up for any amount of necessary impulse. This illusion is shattered in the Placid Gulf, and the pages describing Decoud's last days (496-503) are among the most powerful in the book. Conrad focusses his imagination on the feelings of a skeptic who no longer has a world to despise, of an intellectual who no longer has entangled ideas to disentangle because he is in the presence of a brooding gloom. The relevance of this gloom to the San Tome silver is important because it shows that Decoud's solitude is not unlike that of the Senior Gould whom the silver victimised because of his weakness; it is not unlike that of Charles Gould whom the silver victimised through a passionate attachment to matter; it is not unlike that of Nostromo whom the silver victimised through an excess of impulse over intellect. Conrad's description of Decoud's last days puts the direction of the book's skepticism in a much clearer setting.

The skepticism shows that with a leaning towards a single hope, a single scheme of salvation, different kinds of idealists and nihilists ultimately obliterate the differences in their choice of means by embracing a certain destructive and deadly solitude:

Solitude from mere outward condition of *existence* becomes very swiftly a state of soul in which the affectations of irony and skepticism have no place. It takes possession of the mind, and drives forth the thought into the exile of utter unbelief. After three days of waiting for the sight of some human face, Decoud caught himself entertaining a doubt of his own individuality. It had merged into the world of cloud and water, of natural forces and forms of nature. In our activity alone we find the sustaining illusion of an independent existence as against the whole scheme of things of which we form a helpless part. Decoud lost all belief in the reality of his action past and to come He resolved not to give himself up to these people in Sulaco, who had beset him, unreal and terrible, like jibbering and obscene spectres. He saw himself struggling feebly in their midst, and Antonia, gigantic and lovely like an allegorical statue, looking on with scornful eyes at his weakness. ⁴⁴

Antonia's inspiration has failed. It was to be expected that this "allegorical statue" could not evoke a lover's strictness of conscience and where the lover is the highly cerebral Decoud, no spontaneity of consciousness could endure where criticism of everything was of no avail. Conrad goes further and shows that "intellectual audacity" alone was no match for the legendary treasure. What Decoud had believed could be exorcised by his strictness of conscience and not by Nostromo's spontaneity of action succeeds in destroying him as it has

destroyed all the others. He lacks the toughness of Georgio Viola and the gullibility of Captain Mitchell. He must die, physically and morally:

A victim of the disillusioned weariness which is the retribution meted out to intellectual audacity, the brilliant Don Martin Decoud, weighted by the bars of the San Tome silver, disappeared without a trace, swallowed up in the immense indifference of things. His sleepless, crouching figure was gone from the side of the San Tome silver; and for a time the spirits of good and evil that hover near every concealed treasure of the earth might have thought that this one had been forgotten by all mankind. Then, after a few days, another form appeared striding away from the setting of the sun to sit motionless and awake in the narrow black gully all through the night 45

This passage connects the lives of two victims of the San Tome silver who from different attitudes reached the same fate. There is here a dramatic juxtaposition of Martin Decoud and Nostromo which brings out the power of the silver over impulse and reason alike. The fact that Nostromo sits in the gully in the same manner as Decoud did shows that the essence of Nostromo--impulse, pure successful impulse, is being put on trial in the same manner that pure reason has been put on trial. Nostromo's story is to show that uninhibited impulse is as much of a failure as uninhibited reason. It cannot resist the death that comes from a forbidden treasure:

Then, after a few days, another form appeared striding away from the setting sun to sit motionless and awake in the narrow black

gully all through the night, in nearly the same pose, in the same place in which had sat that other sleepless man who had gone away for ever so quietly in a small boat, about the time of sunset. And the spirits of good and evil that hover about a forbidden treasure understood well that the silver of San Tome was provided now with a faithful and lifelong slave. ⁴⁶

When Conrad says this about the Capataz the book is about to come to its conclusion. He gives a hint of how the other glimpses we have so far had of "this man of the people"⁴⁷ fit into the picture of his similarity to the other victims of the silver.

Nostromo dominates the greater part of the book by the universal praise which everyone showers on him. He is pure success, resembling, in many respects, Captain Brierly in Lord Jim. Pure success destroys itself in the presence of something challenging its competence such as Jim's jump from the Patna. In Nostromo pure success destroys itself in the presence of the central symbol of corruption, the silver of San Tome. It is significant that Don Martin Decoud notices Nostromo's fear of failure, his neurotic concern with what people will say. For Decoud, what people will say has never been his concern in life, as witness the unconventional way in which he courts Antonia. For Nostromo what people will say is everything, as again witness the meticulous insouciance with which he courts his "morenitas" in public and the generosity which keeps him in perpetual poverty because he must give and be acknowledged to give in order to exist. The "roundabout logic of emotions" which

makes Charles Gould believe that this life is bound up with the success of the silver mine makes Nostromo believe^{ye} that his existence depends on being thought well of by people. Being well thought of by people is not enough. Nostromo needs to orient his spontaneity of action in an enduring value. This quest for a value is acted out by the names he uses. Before he becomes a slave of the silver, while he is not bothered by any strictness of conscience, while he merely lives each day as it comes, content to be the universal factotum to everyone in Sulaco, he is Nostromo to all but the Viola family that calls him Gian'Battista. 'Nostromo', Captain Mitchell's invention, signifies the supreme illusion on which this man has staked his life, the illusion that existence is a spontaneous response to all and any challenges irrespective of their ultimate merit to oneself and to others. Such an attitude can carry one a long way provided there has been no solitude to allow one to re-examine one's place in the universe. That Nostromo never had this solitude until his return to the place where Decoud commits suicide is made clear by the discussion which takes place between Decoud and the Viola girls before Decoud and Nostromo take the lighter of silver across the Placid Gulf:

'No' said Linda, 'we are not afraid of you.
You came here with Gian Battista.'
"You mean Nostromo?" said Decoud
"The English call him so, but that is no
name either for man or beast" said the girl,
passing her hand gently over her sister's
hair. 48

Before this conversation takes place we have seen Decoud telling Mrs. Gould that Nostromo has promised to lead his Cargadores on the side of the Europeans--yet when he later returns to Sulaco he is absolutely convinced that European interests are detrimental to the cause of the people. Nostromo has been extremely valuable to everyone in Sulaco because he has never paused to think of his own values. He has helped the railway magnate to Sulaco, quelled a revolt against the Blancos, saved Ribiera's life, saved the Occidental Republic (and Gould's material interests) all as a matter of course. He is pure response as opposed to the pure reason that is Decoud.

But when he remains alone with the silver that has brought a deadly isolation to Decoud, his illusions are shattered and as Captain Mitchell puts it, he has never been the same man again. He has changed so much that instead of that name which was unfit for either man or beast he is plain Captain Fidanza. Nostromo the "universal factotum" is gone and has been replaced by Captain Fidanza, a grown-up man in search of identity. Viola's affirmation of human liberty begins to make sense and the spiritual anguish of Viola's wife haunts him. He had refused to call her a priest because it was superstitious to do so but now he believes in having allowed her soul to go to hell. Solitude has shattered Nostromo's illusion and before him is an irredeemable nullity because he cannot grasp any moral identity.

That a nullity succeeds his illusion is shown by his careless handling of the Viola sisters. He is engaged to one but secretly

carries on with the other. There is a coexistence of illicit love with a conventional betrothal. This coexistence acts out the struggle between impulse and reason that have succeeded Nostromo's illusion. There is also the ideal to be a great man with the secret societies that coexists with the impulse to deny these societies any knowledge of the whereabouts of the stolen silver. This struggle between impulse and reason is indecisive in Nostromo although he dies saved, that is, having unburdened himself to Mrs. Gould. Giselle and Linda are symbols of the impulse and values in Nostromo, and the fact that the tragedy in which Nostromo dies is centred on Giselle would indicate a certain triumph of impulse though the author seems to say that reason has triumphed since it is the profound daughter of the Garibaldino who eulogises Nostromo:

It is I who loved you I cannot understand.
I cannot understand but I will never forget
thee. Never! ⁴⁹

In Linda's anguish is contained the world's attitude to the Capataz. The world, except Decoud, never really understood this man who came to realise its absurdity and his ^{own} ~~own~~ absurdity but struggled in vain to correct this absurdity in himself. His story is not as pessimistic as that of Charles Gould or Martin Decoud. He is one of us, striding magnificently even in the moment of tragic shame and humiliation:

Dr. Monygham, pulling around in the police-galley, heard the name pass over his head. It was another of Nostromo's triumphs, the greatest, the most enviable, the most sinister of all. In that true cry of un-

dying passion that seemed to ring aloud from Punta Mala to Azuera and away to the bright line of the horizon, overhung by a big white cloud shining like a mass of solid white silver, the genius of the magnificent Capataz de Cargadores dominated the dark Gulf containing his conquests of treasure and love. 50

Nostromo's career would appear to temper the book's skepticism, but when this career is viewed as the triumph of nature over nurture, response over meditation, it does not modulate Conrad's skepticism in any significant way. Too many forces of good perish in Costaguana--Charles, Martin Decoud, Don Jose--and above all Emilia. Too many unexamined consciences are successful by their own standards --Don Pepe, Captain Mitchell, Father Roman. Does Joseph Conrad want us to place our trust for salvation in men such as these, men without imagination or any sense of what is really at stake? Captain Mitchell, the man who takes himself to be ever in the centre of things, in the centre of historical events, but who really is never inside any, is the most satisfied character in the book. After witnessing "historical events" in Costaguana he returns to England to support his nephew and lives happily ever after, while the most pitiful picture is that of the starved emotions of Emilia Gould, the First Lady of Sulaco. Her solitude is that which oppresses all the victims of the silver but it is all the more striking because she has all the outward paraphernalia of a successful marriage:

With a measured swish of her long train,

flashing with jewels and the shimmer of silk, her delicate head bowed as if under the weight of a mass of fair hair, in which the silver threads were lost, the 'first lady of Sulaco' as Captain Mitchell used to describe her, moved along the lighted corridor, wealthy beyond great dreams of wealth, considered, loved, respected, honoured, and as solitary as any human being had ever been perhaps on this earth. ⁵¹

Perhaps Conrad's skepticism does not in the final analysis admit evaluation in terms of, "who wins?" One must stick to the whole mood of the book, a mood that shatters illusions, exposes the hollowness of human hopes and fears based on neutral forces such as the San Tome silver. There is a caution in Conrad's handling of judgements on the characters of Nostromo which allows us to come to a conclusion long after all sides have made their case. For example, there is no insincerity in Charles Gould's devotion to material interests. He really sees them as he thinks they are--means of bringing order and peace to Costaguana. But then we are also shown the other side which he never consciously digs out--that is, the side that emotionally ties him to rocks in general and later crystallizes into his replacement of his wife by the San Tome mine. He is being true to himself but in this truth lies his tragedy. Here perhaps is Charles Gould's similarity to Jim. They are both prone to cause suffering in the very act of their being true to themselves. When Jim contradicts Doramin's people on what to do with Gentleman Brown, Jim is being true to himself. For the first time in his life he is not carried away by the sheer momentum of events. He makes a moral commitment

in much the same way as Charles makes a moral commitment by going against his father's wish and resuscitating the San Tome mine. Jim can say, "I jumped, it seems" but he cannot say, "I let Brown go free, it seems." He has taken a moral decision and stands by it to the best of his knowledge. To quote Dorothy van Ghent:

Jim submits himself to his dream of heroic responsibility and truth to man, fleeing from port to port, and finally to Patusan, to realise it. And again the ideal is the destructive element bringing about the compact with Brown (a compact made in the profoundest spirit of the dream) and inevitably along with the compact, destruction. The irony is that Jim in his destructiveness was "true." This is the classical tragic irony: the incongruity and yet the effective identity between the constructive will and the destructive act. ⁵²

For Charles Gould the constructive will is the quest for peace and order in Costaguana and the destructive act is the rocky element in him which we see in his resemblance to the slate-coloured statue of Charles IV, his preoccupation with a broken urn in the midst of an emotional outburst, and of course his later singleminded devotion to material interests. Jim on the other hand is destructive to himself and to others because he is under the illusion that he possesses unexercised impulses. He is destructive because he believes that he will know how to act when the time comes, thereby sacrificing the present for the future. Charles Gould misses no opportunity because he is downward bent while Jim misses all opportunities, except one, because he is upward bent. Both of them are under the illusion that

history can be influenced by a conscious act of will. Both Lord Jim and Nostromo show that ultimately no such influence is possible and this is one reason why the triumph in Nostromo belongs to the magnificent Capataz who took history for granted, rising to every occasion without making any attempt at asserting his conscious will on it--until, of course, he became a slave of the silver. Nostromo is not worried about cowardice because he, unlike Jim, never believes it can be obliterated by an act of will. It is simply the child of fate.

Conrad, then, doubts the validity of conscious exertion on the chaotic trend of history. To make such an exertion and believe in its unlimited power is to ignore the impersonal forces at work within society, forces that defy ideals because they have their own laws. In their inability to acknowledge these forces, Charles Gould and Tuan Jim equate lasting values of the human heart with nothingness. The girl Jewel is left to wither away in Stein's house just as Dona Emilia emotionally withers away surrounded by staggering wealth. But where no idealism exists, the very nothingness of belief, the ordinary nihilism, also betrays the heart--the Viola girls and the perfect Antonia lose their lovers. Idealists usually allow either the outside world to flourish in an emotional wasteland as in the case of Gould, or they let the spiritual world flourish in a chaotic social upheaval as in Jim's case. The Gould Concession does not stem the tide of revolutions in Costaguana--and Jim's unflinching glance does not save Doramin's kingdom which is bereft of all able-bodied leadership. A

flourishing of impulse at the detriment of reason is as nihilistic as a flourishing of reason at the cost of impulse. It is in this context that Stein's submission to the destructive element is to be understood. The deep sea of impulse must keep one exerting himself for his ideal.

The two forces of impulse and reason, action and ideal are so important in Conrad's writing that some of his best passages appear to be weaving together so many contradictions that we are left with the presence of a paralysed force. Let us take Marlow's judgement on Jim's career. Jim becomes an externally passive man who is really a violent soul. He seems to be going straight to heaven and yet he really ascends an inscrutable, unforgiven and forgotten cloud of excessive romanticism. He impresses Doramin's people with a proud and an unflinching glance born of the alluring shape of an extraordinary success only to welcome a veiled opportunity. His last vision, though not one of horror like that of the demonic god of Heart of Darkness, is still only a foggy hope for an unattainable peace of mind. In Nostromo, Dr. Monygham, devoted to Emilia Gould to the point of self-abasement and efficient and hard-working in serving the humanity he betrayed under Guzman Bento, can still never ward off the terror of his torturer Father Beron and he seeks in vain to find in the Capataz that which has damned him. The attempt at salvation is impressive, the reward questionable. Jim's reward is also questionable in spite of the eulogy Marlow makes. After all, Jim for all we can see (and Conrad makes us see a great deal), leaves the palpable and throbbing

present for a world of shades, a world inaccessible to Marlow's sympathy and Jewel's love, an illusory world. The judgement speaks for itself:

He passes away under a cloud, inscrutable at heart, forgotten, unforgiven and excessively romantic. Not in the wildest days of his boyish visions could he have seen the alluring shape of such an extraordinary success! For it may very well be that in the short moment of his last proud and unflinching glance, he had beheld the face of that opportunity which like an Eastern bride, had come veiled to his side. But we can see him, an obscure conqueror of fame, tearing himself out of the arms of a jealous love at the sign, at the call of his exalted egoism. He goes away from a living woman to celebrate his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct. Is he satisfied--quite, now, I wonder?.... and yet there are moments, too when he passes from my eyes like a disembodied spirit astray amongst the passions of this earth, ready to surrender himself faithfully to the claims of his own world of shades. 53

In this passage is summed up the whole point I have tried to discuss in this part of the thesis. It is the point that in a world where men need illusions so as to erect certain values on these illusions, some men so passionately identify themselves with the values they choose that they totally ignore the validity of the world which distracts them from their illusions, such as the world of human emotions. Conrad, in my view, seems to throw his biting skepticism against this single-minded belief in the potency of a value which is, after all, only based on an illusion. The single-minded devotion ignores either impulse or reason as a constituent

of a balanced attitude to human values. A proper balance of impulse and reason should produce a proper devotion to men's values, a devotion to illusions. Nostromo, and to a certain extent Lord Jim show that the tragedy (and the glory) of most people stems from an unbalanced projection of either impulse or reason into their illusion. Jim seems unbalanced in this respect. He makes his illusion the only reality worth following. The skeptic author asks, "Is he satisfied?" Are we? The conscience of Conrad's characters becomes our conscience.

- CHAPTER III -

- CONSCIENCE AS ETHOS -

Reason has no power over history. In Nostromo Conrad mocks the illusion that reason can create order out of the chaos of existence. Nevertheless, this chaos over which reason has no power must be confronted and tackled. Man must interpret and give significance to the chaos. Man must act according to his interpretation although no such interpretation can explain the chaos. The nearest picture of what I am saying here is the volcano facing Axel Heyst at the opening of Victory:

His nearest neighbour--I am speaking now of things showing some sort of animation--was an indolent volcano which smoked faintly all day with its head just above the northern horizon, and at night levelled at him, from amongst the clear stars, a dull red glow, expanding and collapsing spasmodically like the end of a gigantic cigar puffed at intermittently in the dark. Axel Heyst was also a smoker; and when he lounged on his verandah with his cheroot, the last thing before going to bed, he made in the night the same sort of glow and the same size as that other one so many miles away.¹

The volcano described here is a neutral immensity that only appears to mimic Heyst. It is not and can never be conscious of Heyst's actions. But it well portrays the universe into which Heyst is born. Heyst has to interpret and give significance to such a neutral force, although it also seems to mock the futile efforts of his veins. It seems to mock the relics of the Tropical

Belt Coal Company. Heyst like Razumov has to confront this universe. Let me say that he has a call, a vocation, a quest to confront and tackle the universe. Here emerges the paradox in the Conradian ethos. A force over which man has no control, no rational power of control, must be confronted and tackled. This neutral force is the source of man's quest.

A man undertakes his quest by embarking on a labyrinthine progress towards a moment of crisis, an infinite moment in which he is "redeemed," as it were, from the consequences of futility and failure. This progress towards the infinite moment involves an intense dialogue with one's conscience. One probes oneself intensely because one is intensely aware of the ramifications of one's actions. This intense dialogue is what makes the quest dramatic. In one sense the dialogue is the progress towards the infinite moment. For Axel Heyst the dialogue begins with the help given to Morrison although it takes Lena and "the evil trio" who visit Samburan to intensify it. For Kirylo Sidorovitch Razumov the dialogue begins with Haldin's visit and ends in a conversation with Haldin's sister.

I need to say a word or two more about "the infinite moment," a paradoxical concept central in Robert Browning's poetry and, I find, central to Conrad's ethos. The infinite is joined to the finite, the eternal to the transient in the hour in which a man perceives what he had been looking for all along. If he had not

perceived it before, how could he have looked for it? That is the paradox. The man perceives the implications of his choice-- although he chose something over which he had no control. He chose and he did not choose. He must, nevertheless, confront and tackle the universe according to such a choice.

There are cases which would appear to exclude the problem of choice. The men concerned manifest no awareness of the moral implications of their situation. Whereas, for instance, Axel Heyst and Razumov are aware of the moral implications of their situation, men like Captain MacWhirr and Captain Mitchell manifest no such awareness. Axel and Razumov choose. They choose what has been chosen for them by birth, by solitude, by awareness, by failure and by the overwhelming realisation of the futility of their lives. Such a choice imposes a labyrinthine progress towards the infinite moment. Heyst's wanderings in New Guinea can be seen as symbolic of the pilgrimage of his soul. MacWhirr and Mitchell make no such pilgrimage although Mitchell is ever crowing about his having lived in the centre of historical events. Captain MacWhirr and Captain Mitchell are successful men but they do not take the step that leads to a questioning of the significance of their lives. They take things for granted. They have neither been chastised by failure nor overwhelmed by the futility of their lives. Solitude, moral solitude, has kindly spared them her excruciating visits.

I must, however, include MacWhirr and Mitchell in this dis-

cussion. They too are part of the ethos. I look on them as the positive part of the ethos, the part that links salvation with an intuitive response to duty. In my view, this is the less interesting part of the ethos having, like Captain MacWhirr, "the obviousness of a lump of clay." I will not meddle with the obviousness but it will be a necessary point of reference from which to follow Axel Heyst and Razumov. The positive side and what I call the negative side of the Conradian ethos are united in what seems to be Conrad's view of man's ultimate dignity--the dignity of a clear conscience. This is the dignity which Razumov asserts when he addresses the revolutionaries to whom he has just confessed his betrayal of Victor Haldin:

I beg you to observe that I had only to hold my tongue. Today, of all days since I came among you, I was made safe, and today I made myself free from falsehood, from remorse--independent of every single human being on this earth.²

Razumov will be dependent on Tekla. That does not make his declaration false. Tekla will be looking after a cripple who has crossed his spiritual Rubicon, a man who is being frequently visited by the very people he had betrayed. Razumov declares that he has been made safe. The killer Necator destroys his ear-drums and cripples him for life. But that does not matter. Razumov is now safe from himself. He has seen his infinite moment. He will be taken care of by Tekla, a citadel of self-denial and love of truth, a pilgrim who has wandered in the parched regions of ser-

vitute to the inspired Ivanovitch. Disillusioned by the ambivalence of the actions of inspired revolutionaries, this "dame de compagnie" is the most suitable person to look after the "redeemed" Razumov. She knows man's essential dignity and is now an Edgar reclaiming Gloucester. Razumov's speech to the revolutionaries is similar to a paraphrase of Gloucester's speech:

I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;
I stumbled when I saw. Full oft 'tis seen,
Our means secure us, and our mere defects
Prove our commodities³

Gloucester's infinite moment here can be compared not only to that of Razumov but also to that of Axel Heyst. The last words Heyst utters to Davidson are:

... Woe to the man whose heart has not learned
while young to hope, to love--and to put its
trust in life.⁴

It does not matter that Heyst immolates himself soon after these words. The point is that he has been overwhelmed by the futility of his life. He has been overwhelmed by the destructive consequences of his choice, a choice that can be traced to his father but which Axel embraced wholeheartedly. The elder Heyst has become a universal philosopher at the time of his death. The philosophy is neither original nor profound. It is a coward's defence against the slings and arrows of the outrageous fortune. The world is evil, therefore it has to be avoided, Life is deceptive, therefore it has to be avoided:

Of the stratagems of life the most cruel
is the consolation of love--the most subtle,
too; for the desire is the bed of dreams.⁵

The cowardice parading as wisdom in this quotation becomes the most important element in Heyst's character. It is a warping influence that imposes on Heyst the "quest" of returning to the human universe of love and disappointments. At his father's death, Axel Heyst chooses "to drift," to wander over the earth without being attached to anybody or anything. He is on this earth but not of it. He chooses as his weapon against the bitterness of existence "a profound mistrust of life." The world has become "a great joke" to him. He chooses detachment from the chaos before him but we also know that this detachment has been imposed on him by his father whose philosophical tomes belaboured a cynical view of the world. The warping element in Heyst's character is ultimately of the same origin as that in Charles Gould's ^{father's} Gould's character. Gould acquires the rocky element of his character from his father's complaints about the evils of the San Tome mine. Heyst receives his profound mistrust of life from the companionship of his father. It is important to note that both Axel Heyst and Charles Gould make a choice of their destructive element. They choose what has been chosen for them, This is "the incongruity and yet the effective identity between the constructive will and the destructive act" which Mrs. Dorothy van Ghent⁶ speaks of in connection with Lord Jim. I may also say in passing that Jim,

Heyst, and Razumov experience the infinite moment while Charles Gould does not. This is how the "destructive element" is described in Victory:

Three years of such companionship at that plastic and impressionable age were bound to leave in the boy a profound mistrust of life. The young man learned to reflect, which is a destructive process, a reckoning of the cost. It is not the clear-sighted who lead the world. Great achievements are accomplished in a blessed, warm, mental fog, which the pitiless cold blasts of the father's analysis had blown away from the son.⁷

The son appropriates "the pitiless cold blasts of analysis." He makes them his shield against the bitterness of this universe, a universe that he regards as a fraud. He tells Lena:

I don't know how to talk. I have managed to refine everything away. I've said to the Earth that bore me: 'I am I and you are a shadow.' And, by Jove, it is so.⁸

And, by Jove, it is not so! This earth is real. It is not a shadow. Axel Heyst's attitude is what will make the earth look like a shadow.

The earth is real. So is suffering and misery. They are real. They have to be confronted and tackled. Heyst's problem is that even when he confronts misery and suffering, he is still the detached cynic. He cannot grasp the implications of other people's situation because his philosophy puts them all in the category of the unreal, the shadowy, "the great joke." He assumes the position of the mad king in Lear who says:

When we are born we cry that we are come to
this great stage of fools.⁹

Axel Heyst's quest is to discover that "the stage" is less the stage of fools than that of suffering humanity, suffering as the result of a choice, in most cases, a choice that the world has already made for them. An example of this humanity is Morrison whose efforts at benevolent trade with the peoples of the East Indies make him vulnerable to maltreatment at the hands of Portuguese officials. Morrison interprets the chaos of existence in religious terms. He sees a miracle where Heyst sees only an instance of "the Great Joke":

Morrison didn't understand. This was one of those things that don't happen--unheard of things. He had no real inkling of what it meant, till Heyst said definitely:

'I can lend you the amount.'

'You have the money?' whispered Morrison.

'Do you mean here in your pocket?'

'Yes, on me. Glad to be of use.'

Morrison, staring open-mouthed, groped over his shoulder for the cord of the eyeglass hanging down his back It was as if he expected Heyst's usual white suit of the tropics to change into a shining garment flowing down to his toes, and a pair of great dazzling wings to sprout on the Swede's shoulders--and didn't want to miss a single detail of the transformation.¹⁰

Morrison feels the need to worship this apparition. He senses a miracle. Heyst sees the absurdity of a miracle and says:

||
I have no connection with the supernatural.

The trouble is that a universe which cannot penetrate Heyst's

attitude tends to attribute to him supernatural connections. Heyst will be forced to give significance to this earth that he says is a shadow. He has an impulsive generosity which contradicts the philosophical blasts of his father. He chooses these contradictory traits. He gives rein to generosity while dispassionately regarding the effects of his generosity as a shadow. As in the Heyst-volcano relationship that I mentioned earlier, he does not understand the world--and the world does not understand him. The world gives him a variety of nicknames. They all miss the mark. They represent a futile attempt at unmasking a person to whom masks have become an organic element of the total man. We can no longer regard the philosophy of the elder Heyst as a mask of his son. The son has adopted it and made it part of himself. He has made his choice an unconscious element of his character. But the nicknames, though mistaken, still show that Heyst has a vocation. It is the vocation to render the nicknames irrelevant by returning to the human community. The nicknames describe a supernatural being whose successes and failures are all above the lot of ordinary men. Heyst's quest is to return to the lot of "ordinary" suffering mankind. To accept and affirm the fact that this earth is not "a great joke."

When Heyst decides to live on Samburan because he finds the islands enchanting, he is called "Enchanted Heyst."¹² His knowledge of Sourabaya and his attitude to business make him, "Hard

Fact."¹³ His gentility makes him "a perfect gentleman but a Utopist."¹⁴ The narrator also adds that

there were not a few who pretended to be indignant on no better authority than a general propensity to believe every evil report; and a good many others who found it simply funny to call Heyst the spider--behind his back of course.¹⁵

When the Tropical Belt Coal Company is started and Heyst has been appointed "manager in the tropics," he earns yet another nickname from the frustrated smaller businessmen. They call him, "Heyst the Enemy."¹⁶ The narrator thinks that Heyst has become "enigmatical and disregarded, like an insignificant ghost."¹⁷ Schomberg the hotel-keeper sees Heyst as "a hermit in the wilderness."¹⁸ It is an impressive accumulation of nicknames. What do they mean? What do they add up to?

They add up to a continuum. The ends of the continuum are extreme. They do not circumscribe mortality. They circumscribe a ghost who is also insignificant. (Why talk about an insignificant ghost?) Heyst is enchanted and yet full of hard facts. What a contradiction! The person described is still beyond mortality's limitation. Heyst is perfect and yet full of Utopian dreams. What can be more Utopian than to seek to cheat the world by calling it a shadow? And yet Heyst is perfect! This man, to whom others have given the stature of a ghost, of the Enemy (the devil?), of a hermit, has also been branded a spider, a little animal resembling an insect. Heyst is on one level none of these things.

On yet another level he is. The mistaken nicknames have by sheer accumulation brought out what we are to see in Heyst. They have brought out the stature of a man who is both too elevated (as a ghost and a hermit) and too debased (as a spider) to be a human being. The contradiction prepares the groundwork for the labyrinthine progress that Heyst has to make to rejoin the human community. He has to dissolve the ambivalence brought about by his father's philosophy and his own impulsive generosity. His quest is the ability to reconcile philosophy with impulse, to put trust in life, to see significance in suffering.

When we meet Heyst for the first time he appears to be surrounded by the serenity of the early ages of man. Later he is to tell Lena that he is Adam:

There must be a lot of the original Adam in me, after all.¹⁹

But Adam confronts and tackles the chaos of paradise--such as it is. Heyst merely reflects on the chaos. The chaos remains neutral:

He reflected, too, with the sense of making discovery, that this primeval ancestor is not easily suppressed. The oldest voice in the world is just the one that never ceases to speak. If anybody could have silenced its imperative echoes, it should have been Heyst's father, with his contemptuous, inflexible negation of all effort; but apparently he could not. There was in the son a lot of that ancestor who, as soon as he could lift his muddy frame from the celestial mould, started inspecting and naming the animals of that paradise which he was soon to lose.²⁰

But Heyst the descendant of Adam feels that "inspecting and naming the animals" of this earth is an illusion. It is the illusion of progress.²¹ It has ensnared generations before him.²² So indeed it has. The author's point is that the illusion of progress has to be embraced--like all man's illusions. It all depends on how the illusion is taken up. Man cannot look to the Paradise around him and expect it to give him a clue as to how he is to undertake his illusions. All there is for man to go by is the illusion--and it has to be taken up not shunned in the manner of the elder Heyst. Conrad would appear to say that mistakes are better than withdrawal. Withdrawal presumes a message from the surrounding universe. It presumes that the message is a bad one. The whole point of the natural background in Victory is that there is no message from the elements. . . . The volcano unleashes its lava to no man in particular. The sea is tepid and passionless. There is no message. Heyst has to act and give significance to the elements. They are otherwise neutral:

He was out of everybody's way, as if he were perched on the highest peak of the Himalayas, and in a sense as conspicuous. Everyone in that part of the world knew him, dwelling on his little island. An island is but the top of a mountain. Axel Heyst, perched on it immovably, was surrounded, instead of the imponderable stormy and transparent ocean of air emerging into infinity, by a tepid, shallow sea; a passionless offshoot of the great waters which embrace the continents of this globe. His most frequent visitors were shadows of clouds, relieving the monotony of

the inanimate, brooding sunshine of the tropics.²²

This "brooding sunshine of the tropics" is succeeded by "a great silence" as Heyst and Lena discuss Heyst's treatment of Morrison. When Heyst's intellectual lucidity becomes a physical sensation, the silence of the elements deepens. Heyst goes on to denounce life as "the commonest of snares, in which he felt himself caught, seeing clearly the plot of plots and unconsolated by the lucidity of his mind."²³ Heyst expects the universe to console him. The universe cannot console a man who cannot himself make up such a consolation. Conrad makes a telling juxtaposition of Heyst's intellectual lucidity with the indifference of the elements. The portrait of the elder Heyst, the philosopher who taught his son to withdraw from the universe, is now seen against the background of the silence over Samburan:

A great silence brooded over Samburan--the silence of the great heat that seems pregnant with fatal issues, like the silence of ardent thought Heyst sat down under his father's portrait; and the abominable calumny crept back into his recollection. The taste of it came on his lips, nauseating and corrosive like some kind of poison He stirred impatiently, and raised the book with both hands. It was one of his father's.²⁴

The abominable calumny is Schomberg's story that Heyst had exploited Morrison and sent him to England to die. The story confirms Heyst's fears about the human community. He will not find much help there. Nor will he find any in the elements. The stars

are mute, detached. Silence reigns. Fatal issues are on hand. Heyst is in the labyrinth of his quest. But the end is in sight. We see it. He does not. We know that "the evil trio" is planning "to have a little sport with him." He only feels a vague sensation of being "unsettled":

He glanced up from under the slow leaves,
to see by the stars how the night went on.
It was going very slowly. Why it should
have irked him had become unreasonable, un-
settled and vaguely urgent, laying him under
an obligation, but giving him no line of
action He flung his glowing cigar
away into the night. But Samburan was no
longer a solitude The fiery parabolic
trail the cast out stump traced in the air
was seen from another verandah 25

Conrad emphasises the neutrality of nature in Heyst's drama. As Heyst and Lena attempt to find help from Wang's village they have to pass through "gloomy forests."²⁶ In Lena's view the elements are charged "not so much with gloom, but with a sullen, dumb, menacing hostility."²⁷ Heyst also cannot grasp the neutrality of the elements. As he sees Lena on her knees, apparently in prayer, he begins to suspect that "everywhere exist more things than he could understand."²⁸ That, to me, is the beginning of the end. The labyrinthine progress has reached an important stage. Heyst acknowledges the inadequacy of his father's philosophy.

In Victory one cannot ignore the weather, the vegetation and even the topography. Conrad makes insistent reference to these things. The confrontation between "plain Mr. Jones" and

Heyst is accompanied by thunder:

The unruffled thunder resembled the echo of a distant cannonade below the horizon, and the two men seemed to be listening to it in sullen silence.²⁹

Thunder also attends that other confrontation, the one between Lena and Ricardo, but it will not be heard. It will neither interrupt nor encourage the proceedings any more than it will interfere with Heyst and Mr. Jones:

Unheard by them both, the thunder growled distantly with angry modulations of its tremendous voice, while the world outside shuddered incessantly around the dead stillness of the room where the frame profile of Heyst's father looked severely into space.³⁰

The juxtaposition of a distant thunder, a shuddering world and a profile severely looking into space is important here. Thunder is now muffled and distant and Heyst's father exists only as a profile. His philosophy is as ineffectual as the distant thunder. Axel Heyst is helpless. His revolver has been taken away by Wang. He is now physically and morally helpless. The elements, especially thunder, do not help matters by being distant, aloof and unconcerned. It seems to me that the point being made by such an aloofness is that there is no refuge in the companionship of nature. The only companionship worth cultivating, even for a man like Axel Heyst, to whom the universe is "the Great Joke," is the companionship of the human community. That community is here re-

presented by Lena. In Victory the elements are as distant and aloof as the vast expanse of cold earth that is Russia in Under Western Eyes. This vast expanse of earth does not give any comfort to Razumov. His quest is the human community, not a cold, dead piece of earth called Russia. The elements in Samburan are not concerned with Axel Heyst's quest. Lena is. Lena is a throbbing representative of humanity. She must be loved. Conrad seems to be saying that a man can only define himself in relation to man not in relation to nature, to ideology or anything removed from man.

It is because Heyst has not defined himself in relation to other human beings that he cannot cope with the presence of evil. He tells Lena that he should not know what to do in the presence of real evil. But evil is not real in the sense in which Heyst thinks it is. Evil is real as a vacancy, a nothingness. To quote Jean-Paul Sartre:

Good is only an illusion; Evil is a Nothingness which arises upon the ruins of Good.³¹

Conrad's moulding of "the evil trio" agrees with Sartre's point. Axel Heyst has no experience of evil because he has no experience of man. Evil does not exist in a vacuum. Nor does good. When, therefore, Axel Heyst rejects all action as harmful he is not automatically committing himself to good actions. He is not committing himself to evil either. He is taking a course that will

make him a "tabula rasa" -- and therefore vulnerable to the power of evil, to the power of a nothingness that follows an illusion. Plain Mr. Jones also happens to be "the evil power of a masquerading skeleton out of the grave."³² Heyst loses his balance in the encounter with this skeleton because he has had no encounter with a man whom he could not pigeonhole in "the great joke." He cannot classify Jones and Ricardo, just as he cannot totally respond to Lena. He has defined himself, set out his attitude, to an abstract construct that he calls the great joke but he has never defined himself in relation to living men. Perhaps Mr. Jones realises this shortcoming in his opponent. Perhaps like Gentleman Brown in Lord Jim he is merely capitalising on an affinity, a relationship he does not quite grasp. He cannot be merely working on Schomberg's information. He does not trust Schomberg. What Mr. Jones says, however, has a ring of truth. Heyst has given up the world, given up action and now the world has followed him. Plain Mr. Jones says:

In one way I am--yes, I am the world itself, come to pay you a visit. In another sense I am an outcast--almost an outlaw. If you prefer a less materialistic view, I am a sort of fate--the retribution that awaits its time.³³

Mr. Jones is right. Good and evil are to be seen as a relationship, relationship between human beings. Lena is all the time trying to make Heyst map out his relationship to human beings, to Morrison, to Lena. Thunder growls and the forests shudder.

These parts of the universe only stand. They do not qualify anything, not even Lena's act of faith. For it is as an act of faith that Lena's death must be viewed. Heyst is still enclosed in his fear of life when Lena dies. She has, all the same, sacrificed herself for the man she loves. It remains for him to interpret this sacrifice and give it significance. To do this will be Heyst's vocation. It will give him his infinite moment. Professor Bradbrook is hinting at this supreme moment in seeing Victory as "the completest vindication of the values represented by Lena, the vitality trust and energy springing from the very depths of degradation."³⁴ It does not matter that this vindication really achieves its aim after Lena is gone. What matters is that it achieves the incarnation of Heyst, that is, the fact that Heyst's response to the universe becomes a response to a human being rather than to a chimera that was created by the elder Heyst. Incarnation, though an eternal fact, takes time. In Victory Conrad points out various gradations that Heyst climbs to reach this moment. I have already mentioned the moment that he begins to realise that everywhere are things he does not understand. On Lena's death he recognises what imprisons his soul:

Heyst bent over her, cursing his fastidious soul which even at that moment kept the true cry of love from his lips in its infernal mistrust of all life. He dared not touch her, and she had no longer the strength to throw her arms about his neck.³⁵

Lena has won by intent and purpose. She dies convinced that Heyst has at last responded to her love. He will respond, and respond in kind by burning himself up with her. Her martyrdom has in that sense achieved its purpose--"Sanguis martyrum semen Christianorum."³⁶

Axel Heyst's inhibition puts him in the same category as Captain Roderick Anthony in Chance and Angel Clare (who plays a harp) in Hardy's Tess of the D'U^hervilles. Heyst will not surrender his heart to Lena. His is a Puritanism based on skepticism whereas that of Angel Clare is an ingrained Puritanism lurking behind the free-thinking philosopher. Both inhibitions are deadly although both men are "saved" from taking their deadly inhibitions with them to the grave. With these two men a strictness of conscience destroys a spontaneity of consciousness and a spontaneity of consciousness destroys response--if I may use Arnold's phrases. In Captain Roderick Anthony's case an exaggeration of delicacy destroys the man's spontaneity of response. Captain Anthony marries Flora de Barral as a recognition of her suffering. The marriage includes the bitterest pill that Flora has to swallow. The marriage will not be consummated. Captain Anthony, "son of a poet," is romantic and delicate. He must have all love or nothing--just as Angel Clare must marry a virgin or seek the jungles of Brazil. Axel Heyst's problems do not concern physical intimacy--they concern a more serious intimacy, emotional intimacy. He cannot give himself emotionally to Lena. Just as Angel Clare completes the

infamy began by Alec Stoke-D'Urberville, Heyst completes the infamy from which he saves Lena. He rescues her from the hotel-keeper Schomberg only to live with her as part of "the Great Joke" of existence. He cannot recognise the efforts she puts into winning his emotional intimacy. Flora de Barral in Chance complains against this very kind of callousness:

Where could she escape from this? From this new perfidy of life taking upon itself the form of magnanimity. His very voice was changed. The sustaining whirlwind had let her down, to stumble on again, weakened by the fresh stab, bereft of moral support which is wanted in life more than all the charities of material help.³⁷

In speaking of Heyst's callousness one must recognise that a spontaneous response to misery does exist. This response is what creates Heyst's bond with suffering humanity. Heyst's problems arise from his abstractions. Morrison and Lena, do not, for Heyst, exist in their own rights, as ends in themselves. They are abstracted. They are part of the great joke of existence. That is why I brought in the incarnation. I mean by this term the act of affirming or being totally committed to Lena and Morrison as Lena and Morrison, as living imperfect beings not as specimens of the great joke. In helping Morrison and Lena Axel Heyst is moved by pity. Pity is an impulse or should be. My point here is that an impulse can be interpreted and given significance. Heyst interprets his pity as an instance of the inherent absurdity in

this universe. The help given to Lena is, therefore, in no way different from that given to Morrison--as far as Heyst is concerned:

Heyst laid down his half-smoked cigar and compressed his lips. Then he got up. It was the same sort of impulse which years ago had made him cross the sandy street of the abominable town of Delli in the island of Timor and accost Morrison, practically a stranger to him then, a man in trouble, expressively harassed, dejected, lonely. It was the same impulse. But he did not recognise it then 38

Conrad, however, creates a background to the help given to Lena. The background is an insistent and compulsive urge for Heyst to remain where he is. He becomes Bunyan's Mr. Christian asking what he should do to be saved. He becomes the wedding-guest in The Ancient Mariner. He must stay to hear the tale. He has a call, a vocation, a quest. He finds himself rooted to a spot, a spot full of jarring noises, which he would normally have found expedient to leave:

He remained, astonished at himself for remaining, since nothing could have been more repulsive to his tastes, more painful to his sense, and, so to speak, more contrary to his genius, than this rude exhibition of vigour. The Zangiacomo band was not making music; it was simply murdering silence with a vulgar, ferocious energy.³⁹

In one sense the music stands for the insistent power of a call. The call is contrary to Heyst's genius because it is a call towards the human community. Heyst has been existing as an all-knowing

God to whom human imperfection is distantly amusing. He is now called to grapple with it. Heyst sees the cruelty and the absurdity prevalent in this world. He sees these things with an acuteness possible only to a man of his refinement. The Zangiacomo orchestra appears to him as an object of pity. It stands in his consciousness as a pathetic instance of the great joke:

Their crimson sashes gave a fictitious touch of gaiety to the smoky atmosphere of the concert-hall; and Heyst felt a sudden pity for these beings, exploited, hopeless, devoid of charm and grace, whose fate of cheerless dependence invested their coarse and joyless features with a touch of pathos.⁴⁰

For a man of such an acute perception this world should not be a joke or a fraud. But it is. For Heyst the world is a pathetic joke. Lena and Morrison are pathetic. They are victims of evil. Evil is one side of a factory in which the wages are paid in counterfeit money.⁴¹ Man is "an unforeseen accident which does not stand close investigation."⁴² The help given to Morrison is "rather pathetic" and Morrison is "a representative of all the past victims of the great joke. But it is by folly alone that the world moves, and so it is a respectable thing upon the whole."⁴³ A man who sees the world only in terms of folly has missed something. He has insulated himself from life. His quest is to break that insulation by becoming intimate, emotionally intimate with the human community.

Lena recognises Heyst's insulation. It hurts her. After

living with Schomberg's version of what Heyst did to Morrison, she is disturbed to find that although Schomberg's version is iniquitous, that of Axel Heyst confirms a brutal callousness. It is a harrowing experience for her because she discovers that she too has been the victim of such an attitude:

You saved a man for fun--is that what you mean? Just for fun?⁴⁴

That is what becomes of insulating oneself from the slings and arrows of emotional fortune. Axel Heyst puts a barrier between him and Lena just as earlier on he had put a barrier between him and Morrison. He is somewhere in the most complicated parts of his labyrinthine progress towards sanity. Simple laughter is, for him, still a weakness to be eschewed. When Lena observes that he has laughed twice since meeting her, he replies:

That is because, when one's heart has been broken into in the way you have broken into mine, all sorts of weaknesses are free to enter--shame, anger, stupid indignations, stupid fears--stupid laughter too⁴⁵

How like a god you assert your perfection, Axel! There is a desire in this man to stand head and shoulders above humanity. Humanity and imperfection are inseparable. Conrad, like Browning, is showing in Axel Heyst's development, a movement towards the incarnation. What is the incarnation if not an approach to a perfection that is really an imperfection? In his essay "The Nature of Gothic," Ruskin says:

All things are literally better, lovelier, and more beloved for the imperfections which have been divinely appointed, that the law of human life may be Effort, and the law of human judgment, Mercy.⁴⁶

Axel Heyst spurns the laws of human life and human judgment. He gives up effort because he has no mercy. When Lena asks him to try to love her, he cannot respond. He also realises that he cannot respond. The realisation is, of course, a stage in his progress. It is not an overwhelmingly remarkable stage. But it is better than nothing:

These words went straight to his heart--the sound of them more than the sense. He did not know what to say, either from want of practice in dealing with women or simply from innate honesty of thought. All his defences were broken now. Life had him fairly by the throat. But he managed a smile, though she was not looking at him; yes, he did manage it--the well-known Heystian smile of playful courtesy, so familiar to all sorts and conditions of men in the islands.⁴⁷

The defences are broken but the hollowness remains. It takes time. For a man merely following the rules of "a lamentable or despicable game," the game of life, in which truth, work, ambition and love are "only counters,"⁴⁸ broken defences are not enough. Heyst must develop a confidence in other people's motives. He must appreciate their suffering. He must appreciate such suffering as a human being should. Heyst does not. He looks on suffering the way a classical god would. He is like a Juno ~~and~~ enjoying Aeneas'

shipwreck. Indeed, Conrad makes Lena "a suppliant."⁴⁹ Heyst also becomes a god when in his characteristic mockery he describes Morrison's reaction to his help:

Well, the good fellow did pray and after he had confessed to it I was struck by the comicality of the situation. No, don't misunderstand me--I am not alluding to his act, of course. And even the idea of Eternity, Infinity, Omnipotence, being called upon to defeat the conspiracy of two miserable Portuguese half-castes did not move my mirth. From the point of view of the suppliant, the danger to be conjured was something like the end of the world or worse. No! What captivated my fancy was that I, Axel Heyst, the most detached of creatures in this earthly captivity, the variest tramp on this earth, an indifferent stroller going through the world's bustle--that I should have been there to step into the situation of an agent of Providence. I, a man of universal scorn and unbelief⁵⁰ (*The italics are mine*)

I feel like saying to Axel Heyst what Prince Hal says to Falstaff: "Wisdom cries out in the streets and no man regards it." In his mockery, Axel Heyst faithfully delineates the ways in which a vocation operates. It operates in ways that baffle mankind. A man of "universal scorn" can be called. Indeed, he will most likely be called in order that his scorn and unbelief be put to the test. Axel Heyst slights the call by seeing it in terms of supplicants and gods. It is not that. It is a call towards an affirmation of human imperfection, wretchedness and bonds of friendship. It is a call by which Axel is given a chance to experience the unfolding of life, life as imperfection and effort. There is no

comedy in this. The comedy is in the mind of Heyst. It is the result of despising a world from which one has withdrawn. The withdrawal is a defence against the in-roads of human frailties. The irony is that Axel Heyst does not become a god by his withdrawal from mortality. He becomes something much more inferior. He becomes nothing. This nothingness is at the same time the labyrinth from which he must emerge before he can experience his eternal moment.

When Axel Heyst and Lena find themselves trying to outwit "the evil trio," Lena is suddenly gripped by a sense of sin. Her Sunday-school catechism reconstructs itself in the wilderness of Samburan. Mr. Jones and Ricardo become symbols of retribution:

She wanted to know whether this trouble, this danger, this evil, whatever it was, finding them out in their retreat, was not a sort of punishment It was the way they lived together -- that wasn't right was it? For she had not been forced into it, driven, scared into it. No, no--she had come to him of her own free will, with her whole soul yearning unlawfully.⁵¹ *(The italics are mine)*

It was the way they lived together which was not right. Lena is using her catechism to probe Heyst's feelings. She can have no use of a catechism at this juncture--not in the sense of Christian dogma. The way Heyst and Lena live together makes Lena feel guilty for completely surrendering her emotions to a man who can only treat them as part of a universal joke, a hollow man. The hollow man still cannot see. He starts mocking "messengers of

morality, avengers of righteousness, agents of Providence."⁵²

Universal scorn and unbelief can be disastrous.

The treatment of Morrison is just as callous. Heyst feigns interest in Morrison's adventures just to humour him. I have already mentioned that Heyst saved Morrison just for fun. He excites Morrison into working himself to death for a cause he, Heyst, regards as ridiculous and lamentable. Schomberg's version of Heyst's dealings with Morrison is true in this sense. Heyst did not meet Morrison intellectually and emotionally. He did not remotely meet him as one man meets another man. He met him as an adult takes delight in a baby's pranks. This is the sense in which Schomberg is right when he spreads the story that after fleecing Morrison until he was penniless Axel Heyst sent Morrison to England to die. Heyst, like his father, had "claimed for mankind that right to absolute moral and intellectual liberty of which he no longer believed them worthy."⁵³ Heyst allows Morrison to devote his life to what he himself could call illusions.

Morrison's beliefs and enterprises appear deranged only from Axel's point of view, that is, the point of view of the man who actively encourages such enterprises. The hypocrisy can only result from Heyst's tendency to regard himself as a god dealing with a stupid mortal or a wise adult dealing with a child--probably a mentally-retarded child. Heyst destroys Morrison's integrity in much the same way that he violates Lena's sense of

chastity--such as it is.

He himself realises, vaguely, that his actions have harmed others. This suspicion does not, however, lead him to the truth. It merely confirms his decision to avoid human companionship:

I suppose I have done a certain amount of harm since I allowed myself to be tempted into action. It seemed innocent enough, but all action is bound to be harmful. It is devilish. That is why this world is evil upon the whole At one time I thought that intelligent observation of facts was the best way of cheating the time which is allotted to us whether we want it or not; but now I have done with observations, too.⁵⁴ *(The italics are mine)*

It is not enough that an action be innocent. The one who does it must be totally committed to what he is doing. He must not, as Axel Heyst maintains, see the action as a means of cheating time, for then he would be using the people for whom he does this action as a means of cheating time. This is what, in my view, is centrally wrong with Heyst. He uses both Morrison and Lena. They are not treated as ends in themselves but as means of cheating time. In the Conradian ethos one can never cheat time; one can only cheat oneself. Heyst does the right things for the wrong reasons. Acts that would make him a saint are performed for frivolous reasons.

Lena's case differs from that of Morrison in one important respect. Heyst thinks that Lena will be yet one more instance of cheating time. For a time his belief seems justified. He

manages to distance himself emotionally from Lena by means of the playful Heystian smile. But Conrad makes us see that Lena will not be just another Morrison. After deciding to help her leave the Zangiacomo orchestra Heyst finds that he cannot easily part from her.⁵⁵ In his relationship to Lena we can detect no suggestion of sexual impotence as we can in Charles Gould's relationship to his wife. Heyst is simply emotionally and spiritually detached from Lena. That is why he finds her mysterious even in the moment of her complete surrender.⁵⁶ She is not mysterious, at all. She is the beneficiary of pity and she knows it. She recognises him as a paralysed force. He will do everything for her except show her his emotional surrender. He is not committed to love as an aspect of life but as an object of his universal scorn. He confronts the universe by negating it. That is what makes him melodramatic when he rescues Lena:

Those dreamy spectators of the world are terrible once the desire to act gets hold of them. They lower their heads and charge a wall with an amazing serenity which nothing but an undisciplined imagination can give.⁵⁷

Heyst's rescue of Lena is a spectacle rather than an experience. It is not a communion of souls who have discovered each other--although all the signs of infatuation are there. Heyst resists giving himself to Lena although he sees himself infatuated by her. He does not yet have a heart that has learnt "to love and to

put its trust in life." One cannot have such a heart by withdrawing from the chaos of existence. One must confront existence with all its imperfections and miseries.

Heyst's career dramatises the Conradian ethos indirectly. A man has finally confronted, and grappled with, a chaos over which his father's philosophy (which he appropriates) has no power. He has done this after being lost in a morass of futile speculations. He has finally acknowledged what he had all along needed to do. To use the language of Sartor Resartus, Heyst has moved from "the everlasting no" through a "centre of indifference" to an "everlasting yea." The world is not, after all, a factory in which the wages are paid in counterfeit money. It is a school in which the blessed ones are those that have learnt to love and put their trust in life. Life, rather than a mere observation of it, is the value to be worked for. It is a value gained through a total commitment to other human beings. Total commitment must be buttressed by total involvement. Deception is out of the question because all deception is ultimately self-deception. One can refuse to take up one's quest but one cannot cheat the time allotted to him, as Axel Heyst thinks he can. Conrad makes us see what Heyst is not--and it is this that Heyst achieves when he rues the heart that never learnt to love and to put its trust in life.

For a more direct presentation of the Conradian ethos we need to look at Typhoon. Typhoon comes earlier than Victory but it

amazingly dramatises what Heyst is not. In Typhoon the central character is not chastised by failure and futility. We see no relics of agonising failure similar to those of the Tropical Belt Coal Company. Mrs. MacWhirr, though bored by the dull letters of her husband, cannot feel any bitterness at being the object of pity and compassion. MacWhirr is successful. His is an intuitive confrontation with the storm of life. He confronts storms and successfully performs his duty. There is neither a "centre of indifference" nor an "everlasting no" here. There is only the "everlasting yea" quietly executed and as quietly reported:

... They are called typhoons Not in
books Couldn't think of letting it go
on.⁵⁸

That is what Mrs. MacWhirr gleans from her husband's letter which tells of his most extraordinary experience. The prosy narration in this letter is only matched by MacWhirr's taciturnity. It is the taciturnity of a man blessed by an intuitive and anti-intellectual grasp on life. Here is a man endowed with that "blessed mental fog" which Axel Heyst lacks. The mental fog is so thick that MacWhirr cannot distinguish a playful remark from a serious query. When Jukes pretends to be superstitious about the flag of the "Nan-Shan," Captain MacWhirr consults authoritative sources about its design. He looks up the official design of the Siamese flag and declares:

There is nothing amiss with that flag
 I looked it up in the book. Length twice
 the breadth and the elephant exactly in the
 middle. I thought the people ashore would
 know how to make the local flag. Stands to
 reason. You were wrong, Jukes.⁵⁹

MacWhirr the ^ehad of a quiet, but insufferably boring, domestic
 set-up is also the MacWhirr who cannot distinguish a joke about
 superstition from a serious dissatisfaction with his ship's flag.
 This character overwhelms the reader by its sheer consistency.
 Conrad has here given us his most striking symbol of anti-intel-
 lectualism. This anti-intellectualism has a purpose. Life must
 be tackled, directly, not by means of stratagems designed to
 cheat time. One has only to examine MacWhirr's approach to storms
 to see this point:

A gale^e is a gale and a full-powered steamship
 has got to face it. There's so much dirty
 weather knocking about the world, and the
 proper thing is to go through it with none
 of what Captain Wilson calls "storm strategy."
 The other day ashore I heard him hold forth
 about it to a lot of shipmasters who came in
 and sat at a table next to mine. It seemed
 to me the greatest of nonsense. He was
 telling them how he outmanoevred, I think he
 said, a terrific gale, so that it never came
 nearer than fifty miles to him
 How he knew there was a terrific gale fifty
 miles off beats me altogether.⁶⁰

This is an approach which does not rely on anything other than
 a headlong plunge into the maelstrom of existence. In one sense
 it is no approach at all. It is an intuitive acceptance of
 blind collision with fate as the only value in life. Water is

water, and therefore the only way to approach it is to go through it! Absurd as this may seem, it works. For, indeed, how can one know the intensity of a gale that one has avoided? How can one know, as Axel Heyst claims to know, in Victory, the lamentable and ridiculous state of the "great joke" that is existence if one has insulated oneself from it?

That is the central irony in Heyst's approach to life. He claims to be an authority on a world he has avoided, a world with which he has had little contact. He is guided by his father's faith in the "force of negation"⁶¹ which mocks men's "miserably troubled bed of their servitude."⁶² This teaching is accepted as an act of faith not as something Heyst himself has experienced. His globetrotting has been valueless because it has been a means of escaping, rather than meeting, other human beings:

Heyst was not conscious of either friends or enemies. It was the very essence of his life to be a solitary achievement, accomplished not by hermit-like withdrawal with its silence and immobility, but by a system of restless wandering, by the detachment of an impermanent dweller amongst changing scenes. In this scheme he had perceived the means of passing through life without suffering and almost without a single care in the world--invulnerable because elusive.⁶³

Heyst is, indeed, invulnerable because elusive. But he does not know, until his involvement with Lena, what it is exactly that he is fleeing. Invulnerable, yes. But invulnerable from what?

Elusive to whom? The absurd has indeed been avoided but Heyst cannot convincingly tell Lena what the absurd is all about. He says he has "refined everything." Since what has been "refined" is not so clear, it could very well be that he has destroyed his humanity without knowing what it consists of. Captain MacWhirr, on the other hand, "collides" with his humanity by intuitively responding to duty. If choice be regarded as the burden of existence, we can safely say that for MacWhirr it is a light burden. MacWhirr is not faced by the problems of introspection. He defines "being" by experience. Such a definition is the sense in which Jean-Paul Sartre is to be understood when he says,

There is no love apart from the deed of love; no potentiality of love other than that which is manifested in loving; there is no genius other than that which is expressed in works of art.⁶⁴

Axel Heyst has not defined himself in this manner. He still clings to his father's sweeping theories about "the great joke." This leads him away from the sea of life. He mummifies himself in his father's philosophy, whereas Captain MacWhirr allows the "deep deep sea" to keep him up. MacWhirr can thus weather the typhoon, punish his dissident second mate, quell the riot among his passengers and perform for them a Solomonic act by fairly distributing their mixed-up dollars. In a way, the taciturn MacWhirr is the anti-intellectual version of the cultured Stein in Lord Jim. MacWhirr's grasp on life seems to me to fit admirably into Stein's thesis on

"how to be":

A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb out into the air as inexperienced people endeavour to do he drowns No! I tell you! The way is to the destructive element submit yourself and with the exertions of your hands and feet in the water make the deep deep sea keep you up. So if you ask me--how to be? I will tell you In the destructive element immerse.⁶⁵

MacWhirr does not enter the destructive element consciously. He reads little and has no time for speculations. He grasps every moment as if it were the kernel of duty. In Typhoon such an attitude is always being compared and contrasted with the attitudes of Jukes and Solomon Rout. Jukes and Solomon Rout are the inexperienced people who endeavour to climb out into the air. They cannot stand MacWhirr's honesty which, they feel, has the "obviousness of a lump of clay."⁶⁶ For a time, Jukes feels MacWhirr's presence keeping him up, but by the end of the voyage he still has not been converted by the Captain's approach to life. Neither has Solomon Rout, whose letters to Mrs. Rout are contrasted with the dull matter-of-fact epistles of Captain MacWhirr to Mrs. MacWhirr. Still, the Captain is associated with inspiration and Jukes is allowed to experience it while the typhoon rages. Jukes ignores the source of the inspiration:

For some reason Jukes experienced an access of confidence, a sensation that from outside
came

like a warm breadth, and made him feel equal to every demand. The distant muttering of the darkness stole into his ears. He noted it unmoved, out of that sudden belief in himself, as a man safe in a shirt of mail would watch a point.⁶⁷

I have already compared MacWhirr to Captain Mitchell in Nostromo. Mitchell is a commentator on the events in Costaguana. In the commentary he becomes a pointer to his own obtuseness. He has one delusion of grandeur. He sees himself as being ever in the centre of "historical events." The delusion seems to me to be an ironic stance of MacWhirr's intuitive grasp on life. By his own standards, Mitchell does, indeed, participate in historical events. In a season of abject failure, Mitchell is the one man who enjoys the fruits of his labours. The irony is that those labours can by no stretch of imagination be regarded as central to the history of Costaguana. Mitchell returns to England to support his nephew and live happily ever after. The delusion of grandeur has worked. It is, after all, only an eccentric way of interpreting the chaos in Costaguana. The Conradian ethos involves a choice which depends on a character's interpretation of the chaos before him. It is this interpretation, an intuitive interpretation of existence that MacWhirr affirms at the end of

Typhoon:

There are things you find nothing about in the books.⁶⁸

A discussion of Captain MacWhirr is an important vantage from which to see Axel Heyst and Razumov. These two have to rejoin the human community after wandering in the deserts of doubt and self-deception. Their progress to the infinite moment illustrates the road designed for those to whom awareness enters into every act. At some stage Razumov even assumes masks. They are tested, found wanting and discarded.

Razumov is an example of a man on whom a quest is imposed from outside. It is imposed and yet he identifies himself with it. His quest is ^{the} human community. Razumov has to gain the essence of the human community, that is, truth. The last time we hear of Razumov, he is being looked after by a "dame de compagnie," a dedicated soul, Tekla.⁶⁹ At this time Razumov is also being visited by the very people he had betrayed, the revolutionaries.⁷⁰ Razumov has lived to gain the companionship of the human community because he is dogged by loneliness from the moment of his birth. He also has this infernal ability to inspire confidence. This talent draws all men to Razumov the way Heyst's universal pity and scorn draw "supplicants."

Razumov has no family connections, being the illegitimate son of a certain Prince K--, a connection unable to shape his opinion or his feelings. The Prince cannot openly accept him. Russia becomes the nearest thing to a family tie that he will ever know:

He was as lonely in the world as a man swimming in the deep sea. The word Razumov was the mere label of a solitary individuality. There were no Razumovs belonging to him anywhere. His closest parentage was defined in the statement that he was Russian. Whatever good he expected from life would be given to or withheld from his hopes by that connection alone.⁷¹

Clearly, Razumov will have to interpret this immense parentage known as Russia. He will have to define himself in relation to this parentage. It is the chaos that must be given significance. Razumov chooses "the silver medal," the highest award given to the best student by the Tsarist Ministry of Education. The silver medal here reminds me of the silver in Nostromo. It is neutral. But like the silver in Nostromo it can be made a symbol of spiritual sterility and death, depending on what it is expected to bring. In Under Western Eyes, I have the impression that Razumov seeks to be invulnerable by insulating himself from both revolutionary and autocratic Russia. This exacerbates his solitude:

Razumov saw himself shut up in a fortress, worried, badgered, perhaps ill-used. He saw himself deported by an administrative order, his life broken and robbed of all hope. He saw himself--at best--leading a miserable existence under police supervision without friends to assist his necessities or even to take any steps to alleviate his lot--as others had. Others had fathers, mothers, brothers, relations, connections to move heaven and earth on their behalf--he had no

one. The very officials that sentenced him some morning would forget his existence before sunset.⁷²

Solitude had now become the most important factor in Razumov's choice. He can support neither revolution nor autocracy. He becomes a passionate rebel against both these forces. Ironically, that is what his quest is all about. He is called upon to be a rebel from the illusions of both autocracy and revolution. He is called upon to stand up for the truth. The truth is neither with Councillor Mikulin nor with Peter Ivanovitch. It resides in total commitment to and total involvement in the needs of suffering humanity. As such neither the strong hand of autocracy nor the incendiary bombs of revolution stand for truth. Tekla does. Razumov's labyrinthine progress towards truth is a progress towards Tekla. Tekla is also a rebel. She is in perpetual revolt against the falsity of men like Peter Ivanovitch, who on the surface stand for truth while in fact they enjoy the limelight created by their stories of adventure, more than they enjoy serving suffering humanity. Haldin ironically puts his fingers on true revolution when he tells Razumov:

It is you thinkers who are in everlasting revolt. I am one of the resigned.⁷³

Razumov is not yet a rebel in the sense in which Haldin holds him. It does not matter. Thinking in Under Western Eyes is the most pervasive rebellion achieved by people in both camps. Besides Razumov,

the thinkers are Natalie, Tekla, Sophia and Mikulin. Mikulin's downfall is not explained but his confrontation with Razumov does show that his greatest weakness as a member of the establishment is "thinking".

Thinking as a revolt makes thinkers vulnerable to persecution. Axel Heyst becomes the object of Schomberg's calumny partly on this account. Lena enters into the picture long after Schomberg has succeeded in creating the image of Heyst as the "Enchanted Heyst." In Under Western Eyes, thinking makes Razumov vulnerable to confusion. Because he thinks too much, Razumov cannot think properly. He harps on his solitude until it becomes an excuse for self-pity:

I am being crushed--and I can't even run
away.⁷⁴

Razumov is being crushed by his own confusion at this stage. After the loss of the silver medal he also loses his "instinctive hold on normal, practical, every-day life."⁷⁵ Razumov's lack of "a little house in the provinces"⁷⁶ has also become the lack of a moral refuge. He sees his own brain suffering "on the rack."⁷⁷ Mother Russia, the nearest thing to a relative that he has, is, in fact, an inanimate and uncomfoting mother who heightens, rather than soothes, Razumov's loneliness. She shows him a vast, mute, and limitless space:

Razumov stamped his foot--and under the soft
carpet of snow felt the hard ground of Rus-
sia, inanimate, cold, inert, like a sullen
and tragic mother hiding her face under a

winding-sheet—his native soil, his very own--
without a fireside, without a heart
Razumov received an almost physical impression
of endless space and of countless millions.⁷⁸

Such a mother will not help Razumov. She has this "winding-sheet" which makes Razumov's task all the more difficult. Razumov feels that "an act of conscience must be done with outward dignity."⁷⁹ Mother Russia has nothing to do with this outward dignity. She cannot see it. She cannot help either of her warring sons--autocracy and revolution are one for her. To ask Mother Russia for help is not to contemplate her vastness but to contemplate one's inner self. Razumov's loneliness becomes "a terror" because he sees the need to rely entirely on his own inner strength, to face himself:

Razumov longed desperately for a word of advice, for moral support. Who knows what true loneliness is--not the conventional word but the naked terror? To the lonely themselves it wears a mask. The most miserable outcast hugs some memory or some illusion. Now and then a fatal conjunction of events may lift the veil for an instant. For an instant only. No human being could bear a steady view of moral solitude without going mad. Razumov had reached that point of vision.⁸⁰ (*The Italics are mine*)

What a harrowing point of vision! We must create gods, heroes, saints and admirers or seek the mental asylum. We have here the abyss of Razumov's progress towards the human community. In a way what Conrad hints here is "the horror" that Kurtz in Heart of Darkness sees on his death-bed. Since moral solitude has been imposed

on him, Razumov must choose between two equally violent storms of life--autocracy and revolution. To quote Jean-Paul Sartre once again:

In one sense choice is possible, but what is not possible is not to choose. I can always choose, but I must know that if I do not choose, that is still a choice⁸¹

Elsewhere in the same essay, Sartre speaks of freedom in these terms:

The existentialist finds it extremely embarrassing that God does not exist, for there disappears with him the possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven We are left alone, without excuse. That is what I mean when I say that man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty, and from the moment that he is thrown into world he is responsible for everything he does.⁸²

That is what makes Razumov's solitude a "naked terror." He has no excuse for betraying Haldin. Sartre is not alone in seeing man as having no excuse for moral failure. Milton would appear to take much the same position, as witness what happens to his Adam in Paradise Lost. In The Ring and the Book we see the Pope justifying his judgment solely in terms of choice. Browning allows none of his characters in this poem to possess the whole truth, but the Pope has to make a decision and this is how he judges the dead Comparini, a couple that brings up saintly Pompilia in the lie that they are her real parents:

Go!

Never again elude the choice of tints!
 White shall not neutralise the black, nor good
 Compensate bad in man, absolve him so:
 Life's business being just the terrible choice.⁸³

Razumov chooses. We are given a glimpse of a moment in which he thinks of returning to Haldin to forge "a fellowship of souls"⁸⁴ with the revolutionary hero. He would tell Haldin about his failure to wake up Ziemianitch. He would confess his political philosophy. He would affirm total honesty to his conscience. After all, "all a man can betray is his conscience."⁸⁵ He cannot betray anything else but he can only betray everything. Razumov does just that. The thought of returning to Haldin vanishes as suddenly as it had come. Razumov does not return to Haldin. He walks to Prince K--. Such a walk, in a moment like that, is a kind of choice. Prince K-- is a member of the establishment. By choosing him as a resort in a moment like this Razumov is choosing the establishment for moral support. That support has none of the vague liberalism which Razumov claims to stand for. He is thus defining himself in an impossible way. He is meeting the chaos in Russia as a divided man, that is, a liberal fighting on the side of autocracy, a liberal choosing to support the persecution of revolutionaries. The most ironic comment in Under Western Eyes is, surely, that which makes Razumov one of those "unstained, lofty, and solitary existences."⁸⁶ It is Haldin's comment to his sister Natalie and stands as a symbol of the revolu-

tion's failure to unmask Razumov.

The mask remains, but only for a while. It must crack at a later test. It cracks from the sheer stress of its own intensity. Razumov is not "an unstained and lofty existence." He is called upon to be "lofty" and "solitary" and in one sense (the sense of ideology) even "unstained." Both sides of troubled Russia help Razumov to go on his quest. Both sides do so ironically, the revolutionaries by sanctifying or canonising an unredeemed Razumov, and the autocracy by exploiting Razumov's loneliness for its own battle against the forces of change. That is the pity of it. This man undertaking yet another move against his fellow men is an exploited man. His deception or "bad faith" has become self-deception. It has boomeranged back to him. Mikulin senses this deception--and uses it. When Razumov, still seeing himself free, decides to leave the Central Secretariat, Mikulin's "unhurried voice" calls him:

"Kirylo Sidorovitch"

Razumov at the door turned his head.

"To retire" he repeated.

"Where to?" asked Councillor Mikulin softly.⁸⁷

The net is closed. The die is cast. Later, much later, in the book we learn that Razumov is to expect a note from the Councillor a few days after his interview. That is, in effect, a police restriction-order. But Razumov has already restricted himself. He has put himself at the mercy of his solitude by offending his

only companion, conscience.

Razumov, like Axel Heyst, is a thinker. The revolutionaries he has betrayed recognise the clarity of his intellect.⁸⁸ They visit him when they have crippled him for life and he is being looked after by Tekla. It is the thinker Razumov who sees in the Russian chaos "the fidelity of simple minds (being) prostituted to the lusts of hate and fear."⁵⁹ The problem with a thinker such as Razumov is that his intellect tends to ridicule, rather than attempt to understand, the aspirations and failures of his fellow men. As we saw in the case of Axel Heyst, a man who cannot understand human aspirations and human failures reduces everything to its absurd components. Mercy no longer remains the law of human judgment, as it is for Ruskin--and effort ceases to be the law of human life. Razumov, Heyst, James Wait, Kurtz and Martin Decoud all at one stage or another view human imperfection from a height that shows mere folly--and no wisdom. The irony is that such a height cannot reveal the folly in the observer's own attitude. That is Razumov's central problem.

Russia is a country simmering with discontent and oppression. Razumov does not define his goals with the oppression and discontent in mind. He does not seem to have noticed these things until the day he finds Haldin in his room. He is taken up by the struggle for the silver medal, that barren symbol of academic excellence awarded by the establishment for the perpetuation of the

establishment. The medal cannot, by itself bring Razumov nearer his fellow men than he has ever been before. In fact, it brings him much further from his fellow men. He cannot see Haldin as a man with an approach to Russia's problems--however imperfect that approach may be. He can only see him in terms of the silver medal. He does not ask how he can be of help. He is overwhelmed by the loss of the silver medal. Haldin and Russia's problems all mean the loss of this medal and nothing more:

There goes my silver medal.⁹⁰

The silver medal is gone but Russia remains. For Russia is not the endless immensity of cold earth. Russia is Haldin. It is also Mikulin. It is Ziemianitch. Razumov's position resembles that of Axel Heyst in Victory and Martin Decoud in Nostromo. For Axel Heyst the world is not the remote jungles through which he has been wandering. The world is Lena. It is also Morrison. Heyst has to come to terms with the world in Morrison and Lena. For Decoud the world is Antonia Avellanos. It is the Capataz Fidanza. Decoud has to come to terms with the world in confronting these two people. He cannot confront them. They fade away physically and emotionally. He commits suicide. Kirylo Sidorovitch Razumov in Under Western Eyes does not commit suicide. But he also cannot confront people. He cannot confront Russia because Russia is people. He sees only endless space and the establishment's silver medal where he should recognise the existence of people who

are discontented and oppressed, who oppress and betray other people.

It is part of the central irony of Under Western Eyes that a thinker such as Razumov should fail to see what the struggle in the Russia of his day is all about. The struggle is about freedom. This is a serious struggle, evoking man's passionate attachment to truth, honesty and integrity. In such a struggle individuals such as Haldin and Peter Ivanovitch may seem to lose a sense of balance. But they are not fools. They have an inner call to which they are responding. The fact that Razumov can only see these men as caricatures shows that he has not grasped the limitations of both sides in the Russian struggle. He has not fully grasped his own situation, which is an extreme situation. It is the situation of a brilliant student who has not given a thought to the humiliations to which his fellow countrymen are subjected. Razumov is not committed to Russia because he does not understand Russia. But such ignorance is no excuse. It is no more an excuse than that of say, a Cape Town student to whom "apartheid" does not mean anything.

In Razumov's consciousness only caricatures can be identified, not people. Haldin is seen as a ghost who "looms lithe"⁹¹ and later becomes a hallucination.⁹² Haldin the dedicated revolutionary is only "the statue of a daring youth listening to an inner voice."⁹³ His passionate attachment to principles and his confidential recital of these principles to Razumov are dismissed off-hand as a

delivery of "luridly smoky lucubrations."⁹⁴ For Razumov, Haldin is "a pestilential disease" bearing "incendiary torches of disruption."⁹⁶ Razumov's "instinctive hold on normal life," I suspect, is that of an intelligent student who refuses to aim higher than the position of a self-satisfied bureaucrat insulated from the turmoils of his country. Conrad would appear to protect this young man from the reader's hatred of smug selfishness, but the protection is ambivalent, since it places self-interest against the background of social values:

There was nothing strange in the student Razumov's wish for distinction. A man's real life is that accorded to him in the thoughts of other men by reason of respect or natural love.⁹⁷ (*The italics are mine*)

The irony here is that Razumov lives to see respect and natural love showered on Haldin, the man he sees only as a caricature. Haldin by his dedication inspires the love and respect of the revolutionaries. He causes consternation in the establishment. Razumov, meanwhile, reasons himself into autocracy, the very autocracy that he claims to detest. From autocracy he moves back into a vague liberalism in an equally facile manner. Very much like Mrs. Joe Gargery in Dickens' Great Expectations, Razumov's intellect is "on the rampage," or rather, his caricaturing ability is. Peter Ivanovitch, Sophia Antonovna, Madame de S-- and all the revolutionaries are presented by Razumov as caricatures.

No one would doubt that men like Peter Ivanovitch have tremen-

dous limitations. But the limitations must illuminate, rather than dim, the good qualities. Peter's feminism is presented as revolting. His wanderings and determination to uproot tyranny are ridiculed. Here Conrad and Razumov merge into each other. Conrad's sympathies are far less with the forces of change than with autocracy. Revolutions and the plotting of revolutions are very serious things indeed. To caricature them as if they were the games of frustrated neurotics--as Conrad seems to do in Under Western Eyes--is to caricature the imperfection of human effort. Conrad seems to be satirizing what, to the characters he creates, are very serious moments. Whether this is done to bring out a more impressive Razumov or not, I cannot say at this juncture. My point is that Peter Ivanovitch and Madame de S--as well as "the wrong-headed" Sophia Antonovna are not given as fair a deal as Razumov. They should be.

As things stand, the irony against Razumov is inescapable. Peter's feminism is no more revolting than Razumov's selfish use of gullible students such as "mad-cap Kostia." Kostia steals money from his father in order to help a dedicated Razumov who is really an informer. The excesses of Peter Ivanovitch and Madame de S--, never convincingly described, are no more devilish than Razumov's own beating of Ziemianitch. Ziemianitch, after all, fails to affirm his role in the human community from mere drunken-

ness, while Razumov hides behind his caricatures of the forces of change.

True enough, Razumov accepts Tekla and loves Natalie Haldin. But he does not at first accept what these girls believe. These girls believe that men serve higher ideals than themselves. The girls practice what they believe. Madame de S-- may seem mysterious and fanatical but she does not, in my view, deserve the heaps of disparaging epithets which define her in Razumov's consciousness. She is seen as "a galvanised corpse," "a painted mummy," a skeleton and "wooden, plastic figure of a rather repulsive kind." She does not talk. She vaticinates with an extraordinary rapidity.⁹⁸

I have said that Conrad and Razumov merge. I say this because the Professor of languages, Conrad's narrative device, does not see the revolutionaries in a light different from that of Razumov. At times Razumov's remarks are sarcastic. Those of the Professor are not.

The point I am trying to make now is that whether Conrad and Razumov merge or not, Under Western Eyes has an angle on revolutionaries. The angle reveals the anguish of a man who is troubled by his neutrality in a turmoil involving principles. Such a man is Razumov, though it could be Conrad. I will say throughout that such a man is Razumov. We see him groping about for a theory that will explain his neutrality. He is trying to justify his aloofness

from the discussion of current affairs that is sweeping his university. He is looking for a modus vivendi with the turmoil in his country. His solitude drives him inwards and he measures all ideals by his own needs. He evolves a view of politics which rejects revolution without accepting autocracy:

History not Theory
Patriotism not Internationalism
Evolution not Revolution
Direction not Destruction
Unity not Disruption.⁹⁹

There is a fallacy in this view. Razumov contrasts things that are not contradictory but complementary. Perhaps it is because he can make such a contrast that he makes himself the victim of both the revolution and the autocracy. History needs theories, else we should still be in the Stone Age. How can one be patriotic unless the "patria" exists among other nations? Why rave about Russia if there are no other countries with which to compare Russia? If everything is Russian, then nothing is! Revolution, standing for change, cannot be opposed to evolution which only stands for slower change. Destruction and disruption are often the only means with which to effect direction and unity. Peter Ivanovitch's theories are deduced from history and they in turn influence history. In that sense, "Peter Ivanovitch is inspired," as Sophia says.¹⁰⁰ Tekla distrusts abstract theories because her history has shown her the ambivalence of such theories. She has seen both the atrocities of autocracy and the vanities of revolutionary prophets. Razumov, a

patriot, so to speak, hunts the revolutionaries in Switzerland. In his own way, he disrupts that evolution which Peter Ivanovitch and his friends want to foster. In betraying Haldin, Razumov smashes with one blow the things he says he believes in. He destroys a patriot who is making history and fostering the evolution towards democracy. He disrupts his unity with the revolutionary intellectuals who stand for the direction of the historical process. This long paraphrase of Haldin's philosophy is meant to show how Razumov rejects one half of an indissoluble whole. We are back to Axel Heyst's saying that all action is bound to be harmful.¹⁰¹

But the choice is not one between action and inaction. It is a terrible choice between equally gruesome actions. It is this kind of choice that Marlow has to make in Heart of Darkness. Marlow chooses Kurtz. He in effect chooses that which leads to death, to life-in-death as opposed to the death-in-life of civilised Europe. A similar choice is made by Charles Gould in Nostromo:

Charles Gould was competent because he had no illusions. The Gould Concession had to fight for life with such weapons as could be found at once in the mire of corruption that was so universal as to almost lose its significance. He was prepared to stoop for his weapons¹⁰²

To stoop for one's weapons may involve being spattered with the mire of human corruption. Not to stoop, on the other hand, may involve being responsible for the misery one sees around him. A choice has to be made--and action must follow choice. I hate Ra-

zumov. He seems to me, with his vague liberalism, to be one of those men of good will who put more effort into admonishing the oppressed against violence than on persuading the oppressors to change their ways. Razumov being interviewed by Prince K--, General T--, and especially by Councillor Mikulin is not a liberal intellectual caught in a difficult situation. He is a die-hard theorist prosecuting the revolutionaries. History, patriotism, evolution, direction and unity cannot come down from heaven like manna. A troubled nation such as Tsarist Russia has to choose these things. Choice implies action. Hence the struggle between the establishment and men like Victor Haldin. To expect evolution from nowhere is to expect more than heaven can give--and I suspect, Razumov sees this problem. His stance of omniscience seems to be a mask taken up to assuage his conscience for not confronting his terrible choice in a manly way. He has chosen the establishment. But this is a choice to which he is not totally committed. It is a choice that seems to merely fill the gap left by the loss of "the silver medal." He has not confronted the brooding gloom of Russia. To confront this gloom is to be totally committed to one's choice. Razumov faces the gloom with a vague liberalism in which "all secret revolutionary action" seems "based on folly."¹⁰³ He sees himself as a believer in "a reasonable adherence to the doctrine of absolutism."¹⁰⁴

What is a reasonable adherence to a doctrine? Does it con-

sist of betrayals and lies? Razumov has to define "reasonable." Until he does this, both Mikulin and Peter Ivanovitch will cling to him--for selfish motives. Both men find the "reasonableness" of Razumov's doctrine to mean their own brand of autocracy or revolution. Razumov cannot define "reason" yet he seems to be highly conscious of his intellectual superiority to other people. Mikulin sees this self-conscious attitude of Razumov. He uses it to tighten the noose around Razumov. Razumov finds that Mikulin's noose is so tight that he decides to escape by denouncing Haldin as a utopian visionary:

I hated him! Visionaries work everlasting evil on earth. Their Utopias inspire in the mass of mediocre minds a disgust of reality and a contempt for the secular logic of human development.¹⁰⁵

The irony in this outburst is that Razumov equates reality with something as nebulous as "the secular logic of human development." What is this secular logic? How do we perceive "everlasting evil" except as visionaries? Razumov is Haldin. That is to say, Razumov is also in the clouds. He is a visionary. It is also part of the irony of Under Western Eyes, that what Razumov says to Mikulin and to General T-- is what he will fling at Natalie Haldin, at Sophia Antonovna and even at Peter Ivanovitch himself. They are all fascinated by such balderdash because it resembles profundity and originality of thought. Earlier on in the book we see that Razumov's fellow-students are also impressed by his

taciturnity which they take for original thought.¹⁰⁶ It is the same kind of originality of thought ascribed to Haldin.¹⁰⁷ Sophia Antonovna comes within an inch of unmasking Razumov, but she only observes the irony:

Remember, Razumov, that women, children and revolutionists hate irony, which is the negation of all saving instincts, of all faith, of all devotion, of all action.¹⁰⁸

The irony mentioned by Sophia is a mask. Razumov is at this juncture using irony and sarcasm to calm the pangs of his conscience. He has betrayed Haldin and is now spying on the Geneva group of revolutionists. He is also already in love with Haldin's sister Natalie. Irony and sarcasm have so far helped him from bursting into a revelation of his lies. But irony and sarcasm can be taken too far! Any mask can be taken too far. At such a stage what remains is for the mask to crack. Razumov overtakes his sarcasm when he mocks the revolutionists before Haldin's sister:

Ha! The vanguard--the forlorn hope of the great plot. Bearers of the spark to start an explosion which is meant to change fundamentally the lives of so many millions in order that Peter Ivanovitch should be the head of state.¹⁰⁹

This uncalled-for attack on the aims of the revolution is similar to Martin Decoud's view of the politics of Costaguana in Nostromo.¹¹⁰ It is a view that selects and links together only the absurd elements of human endeavour. It is a view that does not tolerate imperfection and therefore cannot confront evil. Razumov at this

stage seems to say that rather than have an imperfect change, let evil roam in Russia. There may be nothing in Peter Ivanovitch becoming head of state. There is a great deal in changing people from serfs to self-respecting members of the proletariat! It all leaves much to be desired but it is still something. It is better, at least better than Razumov's lies and espionage.

The more Razumov accumulates his irreverent aspersions on the revolution the more struggles he has to wage against his conscience. Irony, sarcasm, intellectual audacity, call it what you will, cannot cover up falsehood. Sophia Antonovna escapes the honour of being the first to witness Razumov's confession. She is too baffled by Razumov's sarcasm to realise that Razumov is nearing the end of a pilgrimage. Razumov has reached a breaking point but Sophia does not notice this. She should. He has spoken far more volubly to her than he has done to anyone else. His efforts at hiding his falsehood are manifested by his endless speaking. Conscience conquers:

He made a gesture of despair. It was not his courage that failed him. The choking fumes of falsehood had taken him by the throat--the thought of being condemned to struggle on and on in that tainted atmosphere without a hope of ever renewing his breath.¹¹¹ *(The italics are mine)*

That Razumov should have endured so long is to be explained by his ability to "inspire confidence." Haldin, the man Razumov betrays, says to him:

There is a solidity in your character which cannot exist without courage.¹¹²

The courage comes much later, but the comment is true. Haldin's sister Natalie, that girl with "the most trustful eyes,"¹¹³ continues to trust Razumov even though all his words to her are attempts at hinting that people are mistaken in him. His father Prince K--, General T--, and Councillor Mikulin all say more than once that Razumov "inspires confidence." This is a talent similar to Heyst's "mysteriousness." It is a talent that invites good and bad things alike. Mad-cap Kostia speaks for the university (and even universal) community when he informs Razumov that all his colleagues agreed that Razumov "must be spared for our country."¹¹⁴ This view is later to be endorsed by Madame de S-- who murmurs, "Later on in the diplomatic service."¹¹⁵ People seem to see in Razumov what they would have liked to see in themselves. Sophia Antonovna sees in Razumov "an immense force of revolt"¹¹⁶ and feels that no one that she could remember had been shown so much confidence.¹¹⁷ Sophia should know. She has dedicated her life to the revolution. It is a sincere dedication which Conrad having created is unable to destroy--except by a biased, evangelical Preface.¹¹⁸

Razumov's ability to inspire confidence is essential to the pervading irony of Under Western Eyes. But the confidence Razumov inspires is part of the essential truth about Razumov him-

self. He undergoes so much suffering that Haldin, the man he betrayed, is not wrong when he numbers Razumov among those "unstained, lofty, and solitary existences"¹¹⁹ of this world. Such men find themselves called to a journey beyond their dreams. They find themselves placed in a situation that demands a search for something. In the end they acknowledge the search. It is themselves they have been looking for. Razumov is one of these men. He is called upon to lead "a lofty, unstained, and solitary existence." He is the Conradian version of the hero of Pilgrim's Progress. He asks himself, "What shall I do to be saved?" To find the answer he wanders in the labyrinth of betrayal, lies, espionage, vague liberalism, a reasonable adherence to absolutism, irony, sarcasm and even despair. The answer turns out to be the original question, "What shall I do to be saved?" This question, in Under Western Eyes, is in the shape of Haldin whom Razumov finds in his rooms just when he intends to work hard for the silver medal. The answer to the question is again Haldin as a representative of humanity to whom Razumov must dedicate himself. Such a dedication is at the same time a total commitment to truth. What shall Razumov do to be saved? He must confront Haldin. That is to say, he must confront himself. That is his Russia. His heaven is a full confession of his guilt. That is his infinite moment. It is the outcome of "a terrible choice," as Browning would call it:

Go!

Never again elude the choice of tints!
 White shall not neutralise the black, nor good
 Compensate bad in man, absolve him so:
 Life's business being just the terrible choice.¹²⁰

- THAT INSCRUTABLE SELF WITHIN -

NOTES - CHAPTER I

1. Joseph Conrad. Heart of Darkness. Gresham Publishing Company, London, 1925. p. 117.
2. Heart of Darkness. p. 105.
3. Heart of Darkness. p. 106.
4. Heart of Darkness. p. 97.
5. Conrad the Novelist, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1958. pp. 33-59.
Guerard mentions the essay by Dr. Leavis on the same subject. ~~The essay by Leavis is quite good.~~ We try to reach the author's thoughts by criticism of his language and find him "muffling." I wonder, however, if we could easily establish the surrealism and the dream--symbolism without the very statements that Dr. Leavis condemns.
6. Heart of Darkness.
7. Dorothy van Ghent. "On Lord Jim" in her The English Novel, Rinehart, 1953. pp. 229-44. Reprinted in Joseph Conrad: A Critical Symposium, ed. R.W. Stallman, Michigan State University, 1959. pp. 142-54.
Mrs. van Ghent sees Jim as Oedipus. Such a comparison does not exclude the role of conscience for Oedipus like Jim reacts to the demands of destiny by substituting peace with the world for the peace that surpasses understanding, the peace of mind. Destiny becomes dramatic only when the individual concerned does not accept his assignment. Had Jonah gone on his mission at the first bidding, the Bible would be short of one curious story of salvation.
8. Heart of Darkness.
9. The Secret Agent, Author's Note p. XIII.
10. Heart of Darkness.
11. Heart of Darkness. p. 79.

12. ibid.
13. Heart of Darkness. p. 118.
14. Heart of Darkness. p. 57.
15. ibid.
16. London: Kegan Paul & Co., 1934.
17. Heart of Darkness. p. 57.
18. in Lord of the Flies.
19. "The fall of the best man is the worst of all falls."
20. The Nigger of the Narcissus. p. 18.
21. The Nigger of the Narcissus. p. 19.
22. ibid.
23. Conrad the Novelist.
24. The Nigger of the Narcissus. p. 73.
25. ibid.
26. The Nigger of the Narcissus. pp. 35-36.
27. ibid. p. 18.
28. The Nigger of the Narcissus. p. 37.
29. ibid. p. 24.
30. ibid.
31. ibid. p. 6.
32. ibid. p. 42.
33. ibid. p. 45.
34. ibid. pp. 10-11.
35. Heart of Darkness., description of Kurtz.

36. The Nigger of the Narcissus. p. 43.

37. *ibid.* p. 172.

38. *ibid.* p. 173.

- ILLUSIONS AND THE NIHILISM OF THE IDEALISTS -

NOTES - CHAPTER II

1. "Within Costaguana there is no salvation."

I have irreverently reversed the notorious saying "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus," to emphasise the failure of Christian salvation also.

a) In the Spanish days Sulaco was the seat of the highest ecclesiastical court in Costaguana p. 35. The railway magnet from Britain light-heartedly says that for that privilege of olden days, Sulaco must now be content with efficient transport--"more steamers, a railway, a telegraph cable, a future in the great world which is worth infinitely more than any amount of ecclesiastical past." Is it?

b) The Church sides with whoever commands a following--Guzman Bento, Hernandez the robber, Ribiera, everyone. It is also part of the Gould Concession--Father Roman. Father Corbelan, however, later the Archbishop of Sulaco, seems to have joined the secret societies threatening a rebellion in the Republic of Sulaco.

c) One of Holroyd's aims is the introduction of purer forms of Christianity in Costaguana. Towards the end of the book Protestants and Catholics are fiercely competing for the souls of the Republic.

2. Nostromo. p. 4.
3. ibid. p. 5. This myth sums up well in advance the emotional sterility that is to attack the victims of the silver. As a myth it also acts out the absence of salvation in Costaguana.
4. Nostromo. pp. 6-7. This place is very like that one where supplicating hands are raised to broken images in Eliot's The Hollow Men.
5. ibid. p. 398. Conrad works his jibes at mankind's illusions to the point of being too explicit here. After all he has already shown us that Gould, Nostromo and everyone else, including the nihilists, worship graven images of one kind or another.
6. Nostromo. p. 431. The nihilist Monygham sees through the grandiose hopes about the mine but he too for a moment makes it a substitute for his remorse over what he did during persecution by Father Beron, one of Guzman Bento's most despicable minions.
7. ibid. p. 511. It is significant that after describing this tete-a-tete, Conrad speaks of secret societies frequented by the last of the Avellanos and the last of the Corbelans and patronised by Nostromo. The societies are of course about to plunge the country into a fresh revolution, thereby vindicating Doctor Monygham's words.
8. Nostromo. p. 84.
9. ibid. p. 85.
10. ibid. p. 57.
11. ibid. p. 215.
12. ibid. p. 83.
13. ibid. p. 59.
14. ibid. p. 561.
15. ibid. p. 60.
16. ibid. p. 59.

17. vide 14 above.
18. Nostromo. pp. 520-2. The full impact of Emilia's suffering becomes more evident when we return to the Gould's courtship and find that then as now Emilia played second fiddle to "material interests". Charles Gould came under the spell of the mine when he was twenty. Now he is having grey hairs under his temple and the silver mine is grinding him away further and further from human emotions. It is significant that the only lie she allows to pass between her and her husband concerns the stolen silver. She too for once comes under its spell. She also lies to her friend Monygham about the same silver.
19. Nostromo. p. 72.
20. *ibid.* p. 510. This bitter remark comes from the Cardinal Archbishop of Sulaco, one of those who had worked hard on the side of Charles Gould.
21. John Milton: Paradise Lost Book I, 599-688.
Charles Gould's fascination with mines resembles that of Mammon, especially if we look at the famous visit to a quarry after he has met Emilia. p. 60.
22. Nostromo. p. 62. It is important to note here that Charles' action is completely unconscious. He cannot explain this distraction from human emotions any more than he can explain the real reason for the preparation to blow up the San Tome mine. Conrad also tells us that 'his expression was tense and irrational.' p. 63.
23. Nostromo. p. 49.
24. *ibid.*
25. *ibid.* p. 521-22.
26. *ibid.*
27. Lord Jim. p. 214. A hotly disputed passage. For me it means, simply, "take life as it is" without either canonising it by optimism or damning it by pessimism. Live!"
28. Nostromo. p. 31-32.
29. *ibid.* p. 142.

30. *ibid.* p. 235.
31. Introduction to Modern Library Edition of Nostromo (1951) quoted in Joseph Conrad: A Critical Symposium ed. by R.W. Stallman, Michigan State University Press, 1960, p. 218.
Warren's treatment of Nostromo is the most perceptive I have read so far. He always puts the book in the context of the other works of Conrad.
32. Nostromo. p. 24.
33. Nostromo. p. 521.
34. *ibid.* p. 71.
35. *ibid.*
- 36, 37. *ibid.*
38. *ibid.* p. 76-77.
39. *ibid.* p. 171. Decoud's outburst has all the characteristics of his skepticism and the sneers he has been developing in Paris, but it is correct in its assessment. The point is, what has Decoud done to improve matters?
40. *ibid.* p. 215.
41. *ibid.* p. 230.
42. Nostromo. p. 267.
43. *ibid.* p. 238.
44. *ibid.* pp. 497-8.
45. *ibid.* p. 501.
46. *ibid.*
47. *ibid.* p. 301.
48. *ibid.* p. 232.
49. *ibid.* p. 566.
50. *ibid.*

51. *ibid.* p. 555.

52. On Lord Jim from her The English Novel (Rinehart, 1953) pp. 229-44 quoted in Joseph Conrad, A Critical Symposium ed. R.W. Stallman, Michigan State University Press, 1960, pp. 142-54.

53. Lord Jim. p. 416.

NOTES

CHAPTER III

- CONSCIENCE AS ETHOS -

1. Victory, p. 4.
2. Under Western Eyes, p. 365.
3. King Lear, Act IV, I, 18-21, Clarendon edition.
 Gloucester receives an inner sight, an inner light which makes physical light unnecessary. Razumov's inner security, inner peace, makes physical security unimportant. He can bear the slings and arrows of outrageous Necator because he has successfully borne the slings and arrows of a tormented conscience.
4. Victory, p. 410.
5. *ibid.* p. 219.
6. Joseph Conrad: A Critical Symposium, ed. R.W.Stallman, Michigan State Univ., 1960, p. 143.
7. Victory, pp. 91-92.
8. *ibid.* p. 350.
9. King Lear, IV, iv, 182-83. Clarendon edition.
10. Victory, p. 16
11. *ibid.* p. 17.
12. *ibid.* p. 12.
13. 14. *ibid.* p. 8.
15. *ibid.* p. 21.
16. 17. *ibid.* p. 24.
18. *ibid.* p. 31.
19. 20. *ibid.* p. 173.
21. *ibid.* p. 174
22. *ibid.* p. 4
23. *ibid.* p. 215.
24. *ibid.* p. 218.
25. *ibid.* pp. 258-59.
26. 27. *ibid.* p. 353.

28. *ibid.* p. 373.
29. *ibid.* p. 381.
30. *ibid.* p. 390.
31. Introduction to The Maids and Death Watch, two plays by Jean Genet, Grove Press, 1954, p. 31.
32. Victory, p. 390.
33. *ibid.* p. 379.
34. Joseph Conrad, Poland's English Genius, Cambridge U.P., 1941, pp. 62-67.
Quoted in R.W. Stallman's, Joseph Conrad: A critical Symposium, Michigan State U.P., 1960.
Bradbrook sees Axel Heyst as "the last of the hollow men" -- and quotes metaphors that place Heyst in such a light. I have tried to show Heyst as a hollow man who is saved although in Conrad the saved ones do not live to celebrate their salvation. They do that in heaven or as in Razumov's case, as cripples.
35. Victory, p. 406.
36. "The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christianity." One could see much about Christian salvation in this book. The kind of salvation in my mind is of a different order. It is salvation from Socratic man's tendency "to refine everything away," to substitute word for flesh instead of flesh for word. Heyst's awareness is indisputable. But it is the awareness that kills because it fails to recognise human imperfection as a value. It fails to see Morrison and Lena as ends in themselves not as laboratory specimens from which to study the workings of "the Great Joke."
37. Chance, p. 336.
38. Victory, pp. 71-72.
39. *ibid.* p. 68.
40. *ibid.* p. 70.
41. *ibid.* pp. 195-96.
42. *ibid.* p. 196.
43. *ibid.* p. 190.
44. *ibid.* p. 213.
45. *ibid.* p. 210.
46. John Ruskin: Selections and Essays, ed. F.W. Roe, pub. Scribner's Sons, 1946, p. 242.

47. Victory, p. 221. Here is one of those instances which show
Heyst as "the last of the hollow men" to use Brad-
brook's phrase. He has this smile and this courtesy
without meaning.
48. *ibid.* p. 203.
49. *ibid.* p. 83.
50. *ibid.* pp. 198-99.
51. 52. *ibid.* p. 354.
53. *ibid.* p. 91.
54. *ibid.* p. 54.
55. *ibid.* p. 86.
56. *ibid.* p. 192.
57. *ibid.* p. 77.
58. Typhoon, p. 93.
59. *ibid.* p. 10.
60. *ibid.* pp. 34-35.
61. 62. Victory, p. 220.
63. *ibid.* p. 90.
64. Existentialism is a Humanism quoted in Walter Kaufmann's
Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre. Pub. by
Meridian Books, 1956, p. 300.
65. Lord Jim, p. 214.
66. Typhoon, p. 16
67. *ibid.* p. 89.
68. *ibid.* p. 102.
69. Under Western Eyes, p. 379.
70. *ibid.* p. 379.
71. *ibid.* pp. 10-11.
72. *ibid.* p. 21.
73. *ibid.* p. 23.
74. *ibid.* p. 32.
75. *ibid.* p. 10.
76. *ibid.* p. 32.
77. *ibid.* p. 88.
78. *ibid.* pp. 32-33.
79. 80. *ibid.* p. 39.
81. 82. Existentialism is a Humanism, p. 305, p. 295.
83. The Ring and the Book, X, 11. 1231-1237.

84. Under Western Eyes, p. 40.
85. *ibid.* p. 37.
86. *ibid.* p. 135.
87. *ibid.* p. 72.
88. *ibid.* p. 379.
89. *ibid.* p. 7.
90. *ibid.* p. 14.
91. *ibid.* p. 14.
92. *ibid.* p. 37.
93. *ibid.* p. 63.
94. *ibid.* p. 35.
95. *ibid.* p. 32.
96. *ibid.* p. 34.
97. *ibid.* p. 14.
98. *ibid.* p. 269.
99. *ibid.* p. 66.
100. *ibid.* p. 382.
101. Victory, p. 54.
102. Nostromo, p. 85.
103. Under Western Eyes, p. 83.
104. *ibid.* p. 84.
105. *ibid.* p. 95.
106. *ibid.* p. 6.
107. *ibid.* p. 15.
108. *ibid.* p. 279.
109. *ibid.* pp. 351-52.
110. Nostromo, pp. 170-71.
111. Under Western Eyes, p. 269.
112. *ibid.* p. 15.
113. *ibid.* p. 22.
114. *ibid.* p. 81.
115. *ibid.* p. 220.
116. *ibid.* p. 266.
117. *ibid.* p. 270.
118. Preface to Under Western Eyes, p. IX.
119. Under Western Eyes, p. 169.
120. The Ring and the Book, X, 11. 1231-1237.

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